THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA,

OF

ISPAHAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

My esteemed and learned friend, whom I have anagrammatized as the Doctor Fundgruben, having intimated to me that however flattered he might have felt, upon seeing his name prefixed to the first Edition of Hajji Baba, yet, so retiring are his habits, and so little ambitious is he of being

where having disencumbered myself of my cloak, arms, and heavy boots, and putting myself at ease in my slippers and loose dress, I quietly enjoyed the cup of strong coffee and the *chibouk*, or amber-headed pipe, which were immediately handed to me, and after that my dish of rice, my tough fowl, and my basin of sour curds.

I was preparing to take my night's rest on the sofas of the post-house, where my bed had been laid, when a stranger unceremoniously walked into the room, and stood before me. I remarked that he was a Persian, and, by his dress, a servant. At any

other moment I should have been happy to see and converse with him, because having lived so long in Persia, I felt myself in some measure identified with its natives, and now in a country where both nations were treated with the same degree of contempt, my fellow-feeling for the sectaries of Ali became infinitely stronger.

I discovered that the stranger had a tale of misery to unfold, from the very doleful face that he was pleased to make on the occasion, and I was not mistaken. It was this—that his master, one Mirza Hajjî Baba, now on his return from Constantinople, where

he had been employed on the Shah's business, had fallen seriously ill, and that he had been obliged to stop at Tocat,—that he had taken up his abode at the caravanserai, where he had already spent a week, during which time he had been attended by a Frank doctor, an inhabitant of Tocat, who, instead of curing, had in fact brought him to his last gasp,—that having heard of my arrival from Persia, he had brightened up, and requested, without loss of time, that I would call upon him, for he was sure the presence of one coming from his own country would alone restore him to health. In short, his servant, as is usual on

such occasions, finished his speech by saying, that with the exception of God and myself, he had nothing left to depend upon in this life.

I immediately recollected who Mirza Hajjî Baba was; for although I had lost sight of him for several years, yet once on a time I had seen much of him, and had taken great interest in every thing that regarded him, owing to his having been in England, whither, in quality of secretary, he had accompanied the first ambassador which Persia had sent in modern times. He had since been employed in various ways in the government, sometimes

in high and sometimes in lower situations, undergoing the vicissitudes which attend every Persian, and at length had been sent to Constantinople, as resident agent at the Porte.

I did not hesitate an instant, though tired and jaded, to accompany his servant; and in the same garb in which I was, only throwing a cloak over my shoulders, I walked in all haste to the caravanserai.

There, on a bed laid in the middle of a small room, surrounded by several of his servants, I found the sick

Mirza, looking more like a corpse than a living body. When I had first known him he was a remarkably handsome man, with a fine aquiline nose, oval face, an expressive countenance, and a well-made person. He had now passed the meridian of life, but his features were still fine, and his eye was full of fire. He recognized me as soon as seen, and the joy which he felt at the meeting broke out in a great animation of his features, and in the thousand exclamations so common in a Persian's mouth.

'See,' said he, 'what a fortunate destiny is mine, that at a moment

when I thought the angel of death was about to seize me for his own, the angel of life comes and blows a fresh existence into my nostrils!'

After his first transports were over, I endeavoured to make him explain what was the nature of his complaint, and how it had hitherto been treated. I saw well enough by his saffron hue, that bile was the occasion of his disorder, and as I had had great experience in treating it during my stay in Persia, I did not hesitate to cheer up his hopes by an assurance of being able to relieve him.

'What can I say?' said he. 'I thought at first that I had been struck with the plague. My head ached intensely, my eyes became dim, I had a pain in my side, and a nauseous taste in my mouth, and expected to die on the third day; but no, the symptoms still continue, and I am alive. As soon as I arrived here, I inquired for a physician, and was told there were two practitioners in the town, a Jew and a Frank. Of course I chose the latter, but, 'tis plain, that my evil star had a great deal to say in the choice I made. I have not yet been able to discover to what tribe among the Frank he belongs,—cer-

tainly he is not an Englishman. But a more extraordinary ass never existed in this world, be his nation what it may. I began by telling him that I was very, very ill. All he said in answer, with a grave face, was, '*Mashallah!* Praise be to God!' and when, in surprise and rage, I cried out, 'but I shall die, man!' with the same grave face, he said '*Inshallah!* Please God!' My servants were about to thrust him from the room, when they found that he knew nothing of our language excepting these two words, which he had only learnt to misapply. Supposing that he still might know something of his profession, I agreed to take his

medicine; but I might have saved myself the trouble, for I have been daily getting worse.'

Here the Mirza stopped to take breath. I did not permit him to exert himself further, but, without loss of time, returned to the post-house, applied to my medicine-chest, and prepared a dose of calomel, which was administered that evening with all due solemnity. I then retired to rest.

The next noon I repaired to his bed-side, and there, to my great satisfaction, found that my medicine had

performed wonders. The patient's eyes were opened, the head-ache had in great measure ceased, and he was, in short, a different person. I was received by him and his servants with all the honours due to the greatest sage, and they could not collect words sufficiently expressive of their admiration of my profound skill. As they were pouring forth their thanks and gratitude, looking up I saw a strange figure in the room, whose person I must take the liberty to describe, so highly ludicrous and extravagant did it appear. He was of the middle size, rather inclined to be corpulent, with thick black eye-brows, dark eyes, a

three days' beard, and mustachios. He wore the Turkish long dress, from his shoulders downwards, yellow *pabouches*, or slippers, a shawl about his waist, and carried a long cane in his hand; but from his shoulders upwards he was a European, with a neckcloth, his hair dressed in the *aile de pigeon* fashion, a thick tail clubbed, and over all an old-fashioned, three-cornered laced hat. This redoubtable personage made me a bow, and at the same time accosted me in Italian. I was not long in discovering that he was my rival, the doctor, and that he was precisely what, from the description of the Mirza, I expected him to be, viz.

an itinerant quack, who perhaps might once have mixed medicines in some apothecary's shop in Italy or Constantinople, and who had now set up for himself, in this remote corner of Asia, where he might physic and kill at his pleasure.

I did not shrink from his acquaintance, because I was certain that the life and adventures of such a person must be highly curious and entertaining, and I cordially encouraged him in his advances, hoping thus to acquire his confidence.

He very soon informed me who he

was, and what were his pursuits, and did not seem to take the least umbrage at my having prescribed for his patient without previously consulting him. His name was Ludovico Pestello, and he pretended to have studied at Padua, where he had got his diploma. He had not long arrived at Constantinople, with the intention of setting up for himself, when, finding that the city overflowed with Esculapii, he was persuaded to accompany a Pasha of two tails to Tocat, who had recently been appointed to its government, and was there now established as his body physician. I suspected this story to be fabrication, and undertook to examine

his knowledge of physic, particularly in the case of my friend the Persian Mirza. The galimatias which he poured out, as we proceeded, were so extremely ridiculous, and he puzzled himself so entirely by his answers to the plain questions which I put, that at length, not being able to proceed, he joined, most good naturedly, in the horse laugh, from which I could not refrain. I made him candidly confess that he knew nothing of medicine, more than he had acquired from having been servant to a doctor of some eminence at Padua, where he had picked up a smattering; and that, as all his patients were heretics and abominable

Musulmans, he never could feel any remorse for those which during his practice he had despatched from this world. 'But, *caro Signor Dottore*,' said I, 'how in the name of all that is sacred, how have you managed hitherto not to have had your bones broken? Turks are dangerous tools to play with.'

'Oh,' said he, in great unconcern, 'the Turks believe any thing, and I take care never to give them medicine that can do harm.'

'But you must have drugs, and you

must apply them,' said I. 'Where are they?'

'I have different coloured liquids,' said he, 'and as long as there is bread and water to be had I am never at a loss for a pill. I perform all my cures with them, accompanied by the words *Inshallah* and *Mashallah!*'

'Bread and water! wonderful!' did I exclaim.

'*Signor, si*,' said he, 'I sprinkle my pills with a little flour for the common people, cover them with gold

leaf for my higher patients, the Agas and the Pasha, and they all swallow them without even a wry face.'

I was so highly amused by the account which this extraordinary fellow gave of himself, of the life he led, and of the odd adventures which he had met with, that I invited him to dine; and were it not for the length which this advertisement has already run, I should perhaps have thought it right to make my readers partake of my entertainment by retailing his narrative. I repaid him, as he said, over and above its price by presents from my medicine-chest, which he assured me would

be amply sufficient to administer relief to the whole of Asia Minor.

I could not think of leaving the poor Persian in such hands; and feeling that I might be the means of saving his life, I determined to remain at Tocat until I saw him out of danger.

After three days' administration of calomel, Hajjî Baba's complexion was in a great measure restored to its original hue, and as he might now be said to be free from danger, and in a fair way of recovery, I proposed proceeding on my journey. The poor man

could not find words for the expression of his gratitude, and I saw that he was labouring hard to discover a present worthy of my acceptance. At length, just before taking my leave, he desired his servants to leave us alone, and spoke to me in the following words:

'You have saved my life; you are my old friend and my deliverer. What can I do to show my gratitude? Of worldly goods I have but few; it is long since I have received any salary from my government, and the little money I have here will barely suffice to take me to my own country. Besides, I know the English,—they are

above such considerations, it would be in vain to offer them a pecuniary reward. But I have that by me which, perhaps, may have some value in your eyes—I can assure you that it has in mine. Ever since I have known your nation, I have remarked their inquisitiveness, and eagerness after knowledge. Whenever I have travelled with them, I observed they record their observations in books; and when they return home, thus make their fellow-countrymen acquainted with the most distant regions of the globe. Will you believe me, that I, Persian as I am, have followed their example—hence during the period of

my residence at Constantinople I have passed my time in writing a detailed history of my life, which, although that of a very obscure and ordinary individual, is still so full of vicissitude and adventure, that I think it would not fail to create an interest if published in Europe? I offer it to you; and in so doing, I assure you that I wish to show you the confidence I place in your generosity, for I never would have offered it to any one else. Will you accept it?'

I leave the reader to conceive my happiness upon hearing this—upon at length getting into my possession pre-

cisely the sort of work which may be well esteemed a desideratum in the history of mankind, and which promised to give not only a detailed picture of Oriental manners, but even contrasted portraits of two very distinct races, into which a great part of the eastern world may be divided; distinct in religion, manners, and natural character, however resembling one another in a sort of general family-likeness.

My eyes, I am sure, glistened with pleasure when I expressed my sense of the Mirza's liberality; and as fast as I refused his offer, (for I thought it

but generous to do so upon the terms he proposed) the more he pressed it upon me.

As a farther inducement, he said, that he was going back to his country, uncertain if he enjoyed the favour of the Shah; and as he had freely expressed his sentiments, which included his observations upon England, he was afraid, should he be in disgrace, and his work be found upon him, that it might lead to his destruction.

Unable to withstand these entreaties, I acceded to his request, and became the possessor of the manuscript

which forms the subject of the following work. I have done my best endeavour to adapt it to the taste of European readers, stripping it of the numerous repetitions, and the tone of exaggeration and hyperbole which pervade the compositions of the Orientals; but still no doubt not only much of that deviation from truth and perversion of chronology which characterise them will be detected, but a sort of 'peregrinity of idiom,' of which, I fear, I have not been able totally to divest it. However, of the matter contained in the book, this I must say, that having lived in the country myself during the time to which it refers,

I find that most of the incidents are grounded upon fact, which, although not adhered to with that scrupulous regard to truth which we might expect from a European writer, are yet sufficient to give an insight into manners. Many of them will no doubt appear improbable to those who have never visited the stage upon which they were acted; and it is natural it should be so, because, from the nature of circumstances, such events could only occur in Eastern countries.

A distinct line must ever be drawn between 'the nations who wear the hat and those who wear the beard;' and

they must ever hold each other's stories as improbable, until a more general intercourse of common life takes place between them. What is moral and virtuous with the one, is wickedness with the other,—that which the Christian reviles as abominable, is by the Mohamedan held sacred. Although the contrast between their respective manners may be very amusing, still it is most certain that the Christian will ever feel devoutly grateful that he is neither subject to Mohamedan rule, nor educated in Mohamedan principles; whilst the latter, in his turn, looking upon the rest of mankind as unclean infidels,

will continue to hold fast to his persuasion, until some powerful interposition of Providence shall dispel the moral and intellectual darkness which, at present, overhangs so large a portion of the Asiatic world.

Fearing to increase the size of the work, I have refrained adding the numerous notes which my long residence in Persia would have enabled me to do, and have only occasionally made explanations necessary to understand the narrative. In the same fear, I have not ventured to take Hajjî out of his own country. His remarks upon England during his re-

sidence there, and during his travels, may perhaps be thought worthy of future notice; and should they be called for, I will do my best endeavour to interpret his feelings as closely as possible.

P. P.

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THE

ADVENTURES

OF

HAJJI BABA.

CHAPTER I.

Of Hajji Baba's birth and education.

My father, Kerbelai Hassan, was one of the most celebrated barbers of Ispahan. He was married, when only seventeen years of age, to the daughter of a chandler, who lived in the neighbourhood of his shop; but the connexion was not fortunate, for his wife brought him no offspring, and he, in consequence, neglected her. His dexterity in the use of the razor had gained for him, together with no little renown, such great custom, particularly among the merchants, that after twenty years' industry, he found

he could afford to add a second wife to his harem; and succeeded in obtaining the daughter of a rich money-changer, whose head he had shaved, during that period, with so much success, that he made no difficulty in granting his daughter to my father. In order to get rid, for a while, of the importunities and jealousy of his first wife, and also to acquire the good opinion of his father-in-law (who, although noted for clipping money, and passing it for lawful, affected to be a saint), he undertook a pilgrimage to the tomb of Hosein, at Kerbelah. He took his new wife with him, and she was delivered of me on the road. Before the journey took place he was generally known, simply as 'Hassan the barber;' but ever after he was honoured by the epithet of Kerbelai; and I, to please my mother, who spoilt me, was called *Hajji* or the pilgrim, a name which has stuck to me through life, and procured for me a great deal of unmerited respect; because, in fact, that honoured title is seldom con-

ferred on any but those who have made the great pilgrimage to the tomb of the blessed Prophet of Mecca.

My father having left his business during his absence to his chief apprentice, resumed it with increased industry on his return; and the reputation of a zealous Mussulman, which he had acquired by his journey, attracted the clergy, as well as the merchants, to his shop. It being intended that I should be brought up to the strap, I should perhaps have received no more education than was necessary to teach me my prayers, had I not been noticed by a *mollah*, or priest, who kept a school in an adjoining mosque, whom my father (to keep up the character he had acquired of being a good man) used to shave once a week, as he was wont to explain, purely for the love of God. The holy man repaid the service by teaching me to read and write; and I made such progress under his care, that in two years I could decypher the Koran, and began to write a legible hand. When not in school

I attended the shop, where I learnt the rudiments of my profession, and when there was a press of customers, was permitted to practise upon the heads of muleteers and camel-drivers, who indeed sometimes paid dear for my first essays.

By the time I was sixteen it would be difficult to say whether I was most accomplished as a barber or a scholar. Besides shaving the head, cleaning the ears, and trimming the beard, I became famous for my skill in the offices of the bath. No one understood better than I the different modes of rubbing or shampooing, as practised in India, Cashmere, and Turkey; and I had an art peculiar to myself of making the joints to crack, and my slaps echo.

Thanks to my master, I had learnt sufficiently of our poets to enable me to enliven conversation with occasional apt quotations from Saadi, Hafiz, &c.; this accomplishment, added to a good voice, made me considered as an agreeable companion by all those whose crowns or limbs were submitted

to my operation. In short, it may, without vanity, be asserted that Hajjî Baba was quite the fashion among the men of taste and pleasure.

My father's shop being situated near the Royal Caravanserai, the largest and most frequented in the city, was the common resort of the foreign, as well as of the resident, merchants; they not unfrequently gave him something over and above the usual price, for the entertainment they found in the repartees of his hopeful son. One of them, a Bagdad merchant, took great fancy to me, and always insisted that I should attend upon him, in preference even to my more experienced father. He made me converse with him in Turkish, of which I had acquired a slight knowledge, and so excited my curiosity by describing the beauties of the different cities which he had visited, that I soon felt a strong desire to travel. He was then in want of some one to keep his accounts, and as I associated the two qualifications of barber and scribe, he

made me such advantageous offers, to enter into his service, that I agreed to follow him; and immediately mentioned my determination to my father. My father was very loath to lose me, and endeavoured to persuade me not to leave a certain profession for one which was likely to be attended with danger and vicissitudes; but when he found how advantageous were the merchant's offers, and that it was not impossible that I might become one myself in time, he gradually ceased to dissuade me from going; and at length gave me his blessing, accompanied by a new case of razors.

My mother's regret for the loss of my society, and her fears for my safety, derived no alleviation from the prospect of my expected future aggrandizement; she augured no good from a career begun in the service of a *Sûni**; but still, as a mark of her ma-

* It is perhaps almost needless to remind the reader, that the Mussulmans are divided into two inimical sects; viz. *Súni* and *Shiah;* and that the Turks are of the former, and the Persians of the

ternal affection, she gave me a bag of broken biscuit, accompanied by a small tin case of a precious unguent, which, she told me, would cure all fractures, and internal complaints. She further directed me to leave the house with my face towards the door, by way of propitiating a happy return from a journey undertaken under such inauspicious circumstances.

latter persuasion. The *Sûnies* hold, that Omar, Osman, and Abubekr, were the lawful successors of Mohamed. The *Shiahs* assert that they were usurpers, and that Ali, his son-in-law, was the next in succession.

CHAPTER II.

Hajji Baba commences his travels—His encounter with the Turcomans, and his captivity.

Osman Aga, my master, was now on a journey to Meshed, the object of which was to purchase the lambskins of Bokhara, which he afterwards purposed to convey to Constantinople for sale. Imagine a short squat man, with a large head, prominent spongy nose, and a thick, black beard, and you will see my fellow traveller. He was a good Mussulman, very strict in his devotions, and never failed to pull off his stockings, even in the coldest morning, to wash his feet, in order that his ablutions might be perfect; and, withal, he was a great hater of the sect of Ali, a feeling he strictly kept to himself, as long as he was in Persia. His prevailing passion was love of gain, and he never went to sleep with-

out having ascertained that his money was deposited in a place of safety. He was, however, devoted to his own ease; smoked constantly, eat much, and secretly drank wine, although he denounced eternal perdition to those who openly indulged in it.

The caravan was appointed to collect in the spring, and we made preparations for our departure. My master bought a strong, ambling mule for his own riding; whilst I was provided with a horse, which, besides myself, bore the *kalián* * (for he adopted the Persian style of smoking), the fire-pan and leather bottle, the charcoal, and also my own wardrobe. A black slave, who cooked for us, spread the carpets, loaded and unloaded the beasts, bestrode another mule, upon which were piled the bedding, carpets, and kitchen utensils. A third, carrying a pair of trunks, in which was my master's wardrobe, and every other necessary, completed our equipment.

* This is the Persian pipe, made upon the principle of the Indian hookah.

The day before our departure, the prudent Osman had taken the precaution to sew into the cotton wadding of his heavy turban fifty ducats, a circumstance known only to him and me, and these were to serve in case of accidents; for the remainder of his cash, with which he intended to make his purchases, was sewn up in small white leather bags, and deposited in the very centre of the trunks.

The caravan being ready to depart consisted of about five hundred mules and horses, and two hundred camels, most of which were laden with merchandize for the north of Persia, and escorted by about one hundred and fifty men, composed of merchants, their servants, and the conductors of the caravan. Besides these, a small body of pilgrims bound to the tomb of Imâm Reza at Meshed joined the caravan, and gave a character of sanctity to the procession of which its other members were happy to take advantage, considering in what high estimation persons bound upon so laudable

a purpose as a pilgrimage are always supposed to be held.

Every man on these occasions is armed, and my master, who always turned his head away whenever a gun was fired, and became pale at the sight of a drawn sword, now appeared with a long carbine slung obliquely across his back, and a crooked sword by his side, whilst a pair of huge pistols projected from his girdle; the rest of his surface was almost made up of the apparatus of cartouch-boxes, powder-flasks, ramrods, &c. I also was armed cap-à-pie, only in addition to what my master carried, I was honoured by wielding a huge spear. The black slave had a sword with only half a blade, and a gun without a lock.

We started at break of day from the northern suburb of Ispahan, led by the *chaoûshes* * of the pilgrimage, who an-

* Officers whose duties are to find quarters for the pilgrims, establish the prices of provisions, make arrangements for their supply, regulate the hours

nounced our departure by loud cries and the beating of their copper drums. We soon got acquainted with our fellow-travellers, who were all armed; but who, notwithstanding their martial equipment, appeared to be very peaceably disposed persons. I was delighted with the novelty of the scene, and could not help galloping and curvetting my horse to the annoyance of my master, who, in a somewhat crabbed tone, bid me keep in mind that the beast would not last the journey if I wore it out by unseasonable feats of horsemanship. I soon became a favorite with all the company, many of whom I shaved after the day's march was over. As for my master, it is not too much to say that I was a great source of comfort to him, for after the fatigue of sitting his mule was at an end, I practised many of the arts which I had acquired at the bath to do away the stiffness of his limbs, by kneading

of march, settle disputes, and announce the time of prayer, &c.

his body all over, and rubbing him with my hands.

We proceeded without impediment to Tehran, where we sojourned ten days to rest our mules, and to increase our numbers. The dangerous part of the journey was to come, as a tribe of Turcomans, who were at war with the king of Persia, were known to infest the road, and had lately attacked and plundered a caravan, whilst at the same time they had carried those who composed it into captivity. Such were the horrors related of the Turcomans, that many of our party, and my master in particular, were fearful of proceeding to Meshed; but the account he received of the enormous price of lamb-skins at Constantinople was so alluring, that, in spite of every thing, he resolved not to be frightened out of his prospect of gain.

A *chaoûsh* had long been collecting pilgrims at Tehran and its vicinity, in the expectation of the arrival of our caravan, and as soon as we made our appearance, he in-

formed us, that he was ready to join us with a numerous band, a reinforcement which he assured us we ought to receive with gratitude, considering the dangers which we were about to encounter. He was a character well known on the road between Tehran and Meshed, and enjoyed a great reputation for courage, which he had acquired for having cut off a Turcoman's head whom he had once found dead on the road. His appearance was most formidable, being in person tall and broad-shouldered, with a swarthy sunburnt face, ornamented by a few stiff hairs by way of beard at the end of a bony chin. Clad in a breastplate of iron, a helmet with a chain cape flapping over his shoulders, a curved sword by his side, pistols in his girdle, a shield slung behind his back, and a long spear in his hand, he seemed to bid defiance to danger. He made such boast of his prowess, and talked of the Turcomans with such contempt, that my master determined to proceed under his immediate escort. The caravan was

ready to depart a week after the festival of the New Year's day, and after having performed our devotions at the great mosque of the congregation on the Friday, we went to the village of Shahabdul Azim, whence the whole body was to proceed the next day on its journey.

We advanced by slow marches over a parched and dreary country, that afforded little to relieve the eye or cheer the heart. Whenever we approached a village, or met travellers on the road, invocations of Allah and of the Prophet were made by our conductors, in loud and shrill tones, accompanied by repeated blows with a leather thong on the drums suspended to their saddle-bow. Our conversation chiefly turned upon the Turcomans, and although we were all agreed that they were a desperate enemy, yet we managed to console ourselves by the hope that nothing could withstand our numbers and appearance, and by repeatedly exclaiming, "In the name of God, whose dogs are they,

that they should think of attacking us?" Every one vaunted his own courage. My master above the rest, with his teeth actually chattering from apprehension, boasted of what he would do, in case we were attacked; and, to hear his language, one would suppose that he had done nothing all his life but fight and slaughter Turcomans. The chaoûsh, who overheard his boastings, and who was jealous of being considered the only man of courage of the party, said aloud, 'No one can speak of the Turcomans until they have seen them—and none but an 'eater of lions' (at the same time pulling up his mustaches towards his ears) ever came unhurt out of their clutches. Saadi speaks truth when he sayeth, 'A young man, though he hath strength of arm, and the force of an elephant, will kick his heel ropes to pieces with fear in the day of battle.''

But Osman Aga's principal hope of security, and of faring better than others in case we were attacked, was in the circum-

stance of his being a follower of Omar*; and, by way of proclaiming it, he wound a piece of green muslin round his cap, and gave himself out as an *emir*, or a descendant of the Prophet, to whom, as the reader may guess, he was no more allied than to the mule upon which he rode.

We had proceeded in this manner for several days, when the chaoûsh informed us, in a solemn and important manner, that we were now approaching to the places where the Turcomans generally lie in wait for caravans, and directed that we should all march in a compact body, and invited us to make preparations for a desperate resistance in case we were attacked. The first impulse of my master was to tie his gun, sword, and pistols on one of his baggage-mules. He then complained of an affection in the bowels, and so abandoning all his former

* The Turcomans, as well as the Turks, their descendants, are of the *Súni* persuasion: with them green is a sacred colour; but it is not so among the *Shiahs*.

intentions of engaging in combat, wrapped himself up in the folds of his cloak, put on a face of great misery, took to counting his beads, ever and anon repeating the prayer of *Staferallah*, or 'God forgive me,' and, thus prepared, resigned himself to his destiny. His greatest dependence for protection he seemed to have placed upon the chaoûsh, who, among other reasons for asserting his indifference to danger, pointed to the numerous talismans and spells that he wore bound on his arms, and which, he boldly maintained, would avert the arrow of a Turcoman at any time.

This double-bladed sword of a man, and one or two of the boldest of the caravan, rode ahead, at some distance, as an advanced guard, and every now and then, by way of keeping up their courage, galloped their horses, brandishing their lances, and thrûsting them forward into the air.

At length, what we so much apprehended actually came to pass. We heard some shots fired, and then our ears were struck

by wild and barbarous shoutings. The whole of us stopped in dismay, and men and animals, as if by common instinct, like a flock of small birds when they see a hawk at a distance, huddled ourselves together into one compact body. But when we in reality perceived a body of Turcomans coming down upon us, the scene instantly changed. Some ran away; others, and among them my master, losing all their energies, yielded to intense fear, and began to exclaim, 'Oh Allah!—Oh Imâms!—Oh Mohamed the prophet; we are gone! we are dying! we are dead!' The muleteers unloosed their loads from their beasts, and drove them away. A shower of arrows, which the enemy discharged as they came on, achieved their conquest, and we soon became their prey. The chaoûsh, who had outlived many a similar fray, fled in the very first encounter, and we neither saw nor heard any more of him. The invaders soon fell to work upon the baggage, which was now spread all over the plain.

My master had rolled himself up between two bales of goods to wait the event, but was discovered by a Turcoman of great size, and of a most ferocious aspect, who, taking him at first for part of the baggage, turned him over on his back, when, (as we see a woodlouse do,) he opened out at full length, and expressed all his fears by the most abject entreaties. He tried to soften the Turcoman by invoking Omar, and cursing Ali; but nothing would do; the barbarian was inexorable: he only left him in possession of his turban, out of consideration to its colour, but in other respects he completely stript him, leaving him nothing but his drawers and shirt, and clothing himself with my master's comfortable cloak and trowsers before his face. My clothes being scarcely worth the taking, I was permitted to enjoy them unmolested, and I retained possession of my case of razors, to my no small satisfaction.

The Turcomans having completed their plunder, made a distribution of the pri-

soners. We were blind-folded, and placed each of us behind a horseman, and after having travelled for a whole day in this manner, we rested at night in a lonely dell. The next day we were permitted to see, and found ourselves on roads known only to the Turcomans.

Passing through wild and unfrequented tracts of mountainous country, we at length discovered a large plain, which was so extensive that it seemed the limits of the world, and was covered with the black tents and the numerous flocks and herds of our enemies.

CHAPTER III.

Into what hands Hajji Baba falls, and the fortune which his razors proved to him.

THE distribution of their prisoners which had been made by the Turcomans, turned out so far fortunate, that Osman Aga and I fell into the hands of one master, the savage robber whom I have before mentioned. He was called *Aslan Sultan**, or the Lion Chief, and proved to be the captain of a considerable encampment, which we reached almost immediately after descending from the mountains into the plain. His tents were situated on the borders of a deep ravine, at

* The word *Sultan*, which in Europe is generally used to designate the sovereign of Turkey, among the Tartars, Turcomans, &c. means captain or chief, and is given frequently to subalterns, as well as to those of higher rank.

the bottom of which flowed a stream that took its rise in a chain of neighbouring hills; and green pastures, teeming with cattle, were spread around as far as the eye could reach. Our other fellow-sufferers were carried into a more distant part of the country, and distributed among the different tribes of Turcomans who inhabit this region.

At our appearance the whole encampment turned out to look at us, and whilst our conqueror was greeted with loud welcomes, we were barked at and nearly devoured by a pack of large sheep dogs, who had soon selected us out as strangers. My master's green shawl had hitherto procured him some degree of respect; but the chief wife, or the *Banou**, as she was called, was seized, at first sight, with a strong desire to possess

* *Banou* implies a female head or chief; thus in the Arabian Nights, *Paribanou*, or more properly *Peribanou*, means the chief of the fairies. The king of Persia's principal wife is styled *Banou Harem*, chief of the harem.

it; so he was left with no other covering to his head than his padded *caoûk*, or tiara, which contained his money. That too was longed for by another wife, who said that it would just do to stuff the pack-saddle which had galled her camel's back, and it was taken from his head and thrown, among other lumber, into a corner of the tent. He did all he could to keep possession of this last remnant of his fortune, but to no purpose; in lieu of it he received an old sheep-skin cap, which had belonged to some unfortunate man, who, like us, had been a prisoner, and who had lately died of grief and wretchedness.

My master having been installed in the possession of the dead man's cap, was soon appointed to fill his situation, which was that of tending the camels, when they were sent to feed upon the mountains, and, as he was fat and unwieldy, there was no apprehension of his running away. As for me, I was not permitted to leave the tents, but was, for the present, employed in

shaking the leather bags which contained the curds from which butter was made.

In order to celebrate the success of the expedition, an entertainment was given by the chief to the whole encampment. A large caldron, filled with rice, was boiled, and two sheep were roasted whole. The men, consisting of our chief's relations, who came from the surrounding tents, and most of whom had been at the attack of our caravan, were assembled in one tent, whilst the women were collected in another. After the rice and the sheep had been served up to the men, they were carried to the women, and when they had done, the shepherds' boys were served, and, after they had devoured their utmost, the bones and scrapings of dishes were given to us and the dogs. But, when I was waiting with great anxiety for our morsel, having scarcely tasted food since we were taken, I was secretly beckoned to by one of the women, who made me screen myself behind a tent, and setting down a dish of rice, with

a bit of the sheep's tail in it, which was sent, she said, by the chief's wife, who pitied my misfortune, and bade me be of good courage, hurried away without waiting for my acknowledgments.

The day was passed by the men in smoking, and relating their adventures, and by the women in singing and beating the tambourine, whilst my poor master and I were left to ponder over our forlorn situation. The mark of favour which I had just received had set my imagination to work, and led me to consider my condition as not entirely desperate. But in vain I endeavoured to cheer up the spirits of my companion; he did not cease to bewail his hard fate. I brought to his mind that constant refuge of every true Mussulman in grief, '*Allah kerim!*—God is merciful!' His answer was, '*Allah kerim, Allah kerim,* is all very well for you who had nothing to lose; but in the mean time I am ruined for ever.' His greatest concern seemed to be, the having failed to secure the profits which

he had expected to make on his lamb-skins, and he passed all his time in calculating, to the utmost farthing, what had been his losses on this occasion. However, we were soon to be parted. He was sent off the next day to the mountains, in charge of a string of fifty camels, with terrible threats from the chief that his nose and ears should pay for the loss of any one of them, and that if one died, its price should be added to the ransom money which he hereafter expected to receive for him. As the last testimony of my affection for him, I made him sit down on a camel's pack-saddle, and, with some water from a neighbouring spring, and a piece of soap, which, together with my razors, I had saved from the wreck of our fortunes, shaved him in the face of the whole camp. I very soon found that this exhibition of my abilities and profession might be productive of the greatest advantage to my future prospects. Every fellow who had a head to scratch immediately found out that he wanted shaving,

and my reputation soon reached the ears of the chief, who called me to him, and ordered me to operate upon him without loss of time. I soon went to work upon a large head that exhibited the marks of many a sword cut, and which presented as rough a surface as that of the sheep dogs aforementioned. He who had been accustomed to have his hair clipped, perhaps, with the same instrument that sheared his sheep, and who knew of no greater luxury than that of being mutilated by some country barber, felt himself in paradise under my hand. He freely expressed his satisfaction and his approbation of my services, said, on feeling his head that I had shaved him two days' march under the skin, swore that he never would accept of any ransom for me, be it what it might, and that I should, henceforth, be entitled to the appointment of his own body barber. I leave the gentle reader to guess what were my feelings upon this occasion. Whilst I stooped down and kissed the knee of this my new master, with

every appearance of gratitude and respect, I determined to make use of the liberty which the confidence reposed in me might afford, by running away on the very first favourable opportunity. From being so often near the person of the chief, I soon began to acquire great ascendancy over him; and although I was still watched with care, yet I could already devise plans, which appeared to me to be practicable, for escaping from this hateful servitude into which I was thrown, and I felt in a less degree than another would have done the drudgery and wretchedness of my situation.

CHAPTER IV.

Of his ingenuity in rescuing his master's money from the Turcoman, and of his determination to keep it.

One of the first objects which I had in view for the furtherance of my plan of escape was to obtain possession of the money which was sewed in the padding of my former master's turban. But it had been thrown into a corner of the women's tent, to which I had no access, and it required much ingenuity to get at it without creating suspicion. I had established my reputation as a barber throughout ours and the neighbouring encampments, and had become a favourite of the men; but although I had reason to believe that the *Banou* of my master would fain become more intimately acquainted with me than she hitherto had been, yet as neither she nor any of the other women could employ

me in my profession as a shaver, our intercourse hitherto had been confined to tender glances, occasional acts of kindness on her part, and of corresponding marks of thankfulness and acknowledgment on mine. But as they knew enough of civilized life to be aware that in Persia barbers were also surgeons—that besides shaving and rubbing in the bath, they could bleed, draw teeth, and set a broken limb; the Banou soon discovered that she wanted to be bled, and sent a deputation to ask me if I could perform that service for her. Looking upon this as a favourable opportunity to learn some tidings of the object of my solicitude, or perhaps to gain possession of it, I immediately answered that provided I was furnished with a pen-knife, I hoped that I could bleed as dexterously as the best of my profession. The instrument was produced, and one of the elders of the tribe, who pretended to a smattering of astrology, announced that a conjunction of the planets favourable to such an operation would take

place on the following morning. At that auspicious moment, I was introduced into the women's tent, where I found the Banou seated on a carpet on the ground, waiting for me with great impatience. She was not a person to excite sensations of a tender nature in a novice like me; for, in the first place, she was of an unwieldy size* (so different from the slim forms that we are taught to prize in Persia) that I looked upon her with disgust; and, in the next, I lived in such terror of Aslan Sultan, that had I aspired to her favour, it must have been in the constant dread of the loss of my ears. However I was much noticed by her, and received great attentions from her companions, who, looking upon me as a being of a superior order, all wanted to

* The Turks differ materially from the Persians in their tastes for women, the one admiring corpulency, whilst the latter show greater refinement, and esteem those forms which are mostly prized in Europe.

have their pulses felt. Whilst making my preparations for bleeding the Banou, I cast my eyes about the tent, in the hopes of seeing the prize, which I was anxious to possess. It struck me that I might make the very operation in which I was engaged subservient to my views, and demanding to feel the patient's pulse once more, which I did with a look of intense meditation, I observed that this was a complicated disorder —that the blood must not be allowed to flow upon the ground, but be collected in a vessel, that I might examine it at leisure. This strange proposal of mine raised an immediate outcry amongst the women; but with the Banou a deviation from the usual practice only served to confirm her opinion of my superior skill. Here, however, a new difficulty arose. The scanty stock of a Turcoman could ill afford to sacrifice any utensil by applying it to a service which would defile it for ever. They were recapitulated one by one, and all found too precious to be thrown away. I was hesitating whether I

might venture to go straight to my point, when the Banou bethought herself of an old leather drinking-cup, which she desired one of the women to search for in a corner of the tent. 'This will never do: you can see the light through it,' said I, holding it up towards the tent-door, and pointing to the seams with the penknife, which I held in my hand, and with which I cut, at the same time, half a dozen of the stitches. 'Where is the cap of that old Emir?' cried out the Banou. 'It is mine,' said the second wife; 'I want it to stuff my saddle with.'—'Yours!' returned the other in a fury. 'There is but one God! Am not I the Banou of this harem? I will have it.'—'You shall not,' retorted the other. Upon this an uproar ensued which became so loud and threatening, that I feared it would come to the ears of Aslan Sultan, who very probably would have settled the dispute by taking at once the bone of contention from the contending parties. But luckily the astrologer interfered, and when he had assured the

second wife that the blood of the Banou would be upon her head, if any thing unfortunate happened on this occasion, she consented to give up her pretensions. I accordingly prepared to bleed my patient; but when she saw the penknife, the cap underneath to receive her blood, and the anxious faces of those about her, she became frightened, and refused to permit me to proceed. Fearing after all that I should lose my prize, I put on a very sagacious look, felt her pulse, and said that her refusal was unavailing, for that it was her fate to be bled, and that she and every one knew nothing could avert an event which had been decreed since the beginning of the world. To this there was no reply; and all agreeing that she would commit a great sin were she to oppose herself to the decrees of Providence, she put out her bare arm, and received the stab from my penknife with apparent fortitude. The blood was caught, and, when the operation was over, I ordered that it should be conveyed to a little distance

from the camp, and that none but myself should be permitted to approach it, as much of the good or evil that might accrue to the patient from bleeding depended upon what happened to the blood after it had flown from the body. I waited until night, when every body was asleep, and then with great anxiety ripped up the lining, where to my joy I found the fifty ducats, which I immediately concealed in an adjacent spot, and then dug a hole for the cap, which I also concealed. In the morning I informed the Banou, that having seen some wolves prowling about the tents, I feared that something unlucky might happen to her blood, and that I had buried it, caouk and all. This appeared to satisfy her; and by way of recompense for the service I had rendered, she sent me a dish made with her own hands, consisting of a lamb roasted whole, stuffed with rice and raisins, accompanied by a bowl of sour milk with salt in it.

I must confess that when I became possessed of the fifty ducats, a recollection of

my poor former master, who was leading a melancholy life in the mountains with the camels, whilst I was living in comparative luxury, came across my mind, and I half resolved to restore them to him; but by little and little I began to argue differently with myself. 'Had it not been for my ingenuity,' said I, 'the money was lost for ever; who therefore has a better claim to it than myself? If he was to get possession of it again, it could be of no use to him in his new profession, and it is a hundred to one but what it would be taken from him, therefore I had best keep it for the present: besides, it was his fate to lose, and mine to recover it. This settled every difficulty, and I looked upon myself as the legitimate possessor of fifty ducats, which I conceived no law could take from me. Mean while I made an attempt to convey to him half of the roasted lamb which I had just received, through the means of a shepherd's boy who was going into the mountains, and who promised not to eat any of it by the wayside. Al-

though I doubted his word, yet, after my deliberation about the ducats, my conscience wanted some quietus: 'I cannot do less,' said I, 'than make my fellow-sufferer in adversity a partaker of my prosperity.' But alas! the boy had scarcely crossed the deep ravine that bordered the encampment ere I could perceive him carrying the meat to his mouth, and I made no doubt that every bone was picked clean before he was out of my sight. It would have been a useless undertaking to have pursued him, considering the distance that already separated us, so I contented myself by discharging a stone and a malediction at his head, neither of which reached their destination.

CHAPTER V.

Hajji Baba becomes a robber in his own defence, and invades his native city.

I HAD now been above a year in the hands of the Turcomans, during which I had acquired the entire confidence of my master. He consulted me upon all his own affairs, as well as those of his community, and as he considered that I might now be depended upon, he determined to permit me to accompany him in a predatory excursion into Persia,—a permission, which, in hopes of a good opportunity to escape, I had frequently entreated of him to grant. Hitherto I had never been allowed to stray beyond the encampment and its surrounding pastures, and as I was totally ignorant of the roads through the great salt desert which separated us from Persia, I knew

that it would be in vain for me to attempt flight, as many before me had done, and had invariably perished or returned to their masters, who treated them with more rigour than before. I therefore rejoiced that I now had an opportunity of observing the country we were about to cross, and determined with myself that if I could not get away during this expedition, nothing should hinder my attempting it on our return. The Turcomans generally make their principal excursions in the spring, when they find pasturage for their horses in the high lands, and fresh corn in the plains, and because they then are almost certain of meeting caravans to plunder on their march. This season being now near at hand, Aslan called together the chiefs of his tribe, the heads of tens and the heads of hundreds, and all those who were skilled in plunder, and proposed a plan to them of an incursion into the very heart of Persia. Their object was to reach Ispahan itself, to enter the city in the night, when all was quiet,

and to sack the caravanserai, to which the richest merchants were known to resort.—Our guide through the great salt desert was to be my master in person, whose experience and local knowledge were greater than that of any of his cotemporaries; and he proposed to the council that as no one amongst them, except myself, knew the streets and bazars of Ispahan, I should lead the way, when once we had entered the city. This was opposed by several, who said that it was imprudent to trust a stranger and a native of the very place they intended to attack, who would be likely to run off the moment he could do so with safety. At length, after much discussion, it was agreed that I should be their guide in Ispahan; that two men should ride close on each side of me, and in case I showed the least symptom of treachery in my movements, kill me on the spot. This being settled, the Turcomans put their horses in training, and one was appointed for my use, which had the reputation of having twice borne away the

flag at their races. I was equipped as a Turcoman, with a large sheep-skin cap on my head, a sheep-skin coat, a sword, a bow and arrows, and a heavy spear, the head of which was taken off or put on as the occasion might require. I had a bag of corn tied behind on my horse, besides ropes to tether him with when we made a halt,—and for my own food, I carried several flaps of bread*, and half a dozen of hard eggs, trusting to the chapter of accidents, and to my own endurance of hunger, for further sustenance. I had already made a very tolerable apprenticeship to a hard life since I had first been taken, by sleeping on the ground, with the first thing that I could seize for a pillow, and thus I looked upon the want of a bed as no privation. My companions were equally hardy, and in point of bodily fatigue, perhaps, we were a match for any nation in the world.

* The bread here alluded to is baked on small and convex iron plates, and when prepared is about the thickness of brown paper.

I took previous care to unbury the fifty ducats, which I tied very carefully in my girdle, and I promised my former master, who from fretting had worn himself down to a skeleton, that if ever I had an opportunity, I would do all in my power to make his friends ransom him.—'Ah,' said he, 'no one will ever ransom me.—As for my son, he will be happy to get my property; and as for my wife, she will be happy to get another husband:—so no hope is left. There is only one favour I beg of you, which is, to inquire what is the price of lamb-skins at Constantinople.'

Here I had another struggle with my conscience on the subject of the ducats. Should I restore them? Would it not be more advantageous, even to my master, that I should keep them? My ability to take advantage of this opportunity to escape might depend upon my having a little money in my purse—and what chance had he of being relieved but through my interference?

All things considered, I let them remain in my girdle.

The astrologer having fixed upon a lucky hour for our departure, we mounted at night-fall. Our party consisted of Aslan Sultan, who was appointed chief of the expedition, and of twenty men, myself included. Our companions were composed of the principal men of the different encampments in our neighbourhood, and were all, more or less, accomplished cavaliers. They were mounted upon excellent horses, the speed and bottom of which are so justly celebrated throughout Asia; and as we rode along in the moonlight, completely armed, I was persuaded that we looked as desperate a gang of ruffians as ever took the field. For my part, I felt that nature had never intended me for a warrior, and although I thought that I could keep up appearances as well as most men in my predicament, and indeed I believe did act my part so perfectly, as to make both my master

and his companions believe that they had got a very *Rustam** in me, yet I dreaded the time when I should be put to the trial.

I was surprised to observe the dexterity with which our chief led us through the thick forests, that clothe the mountains which border the plains of Kipchâk. The dangers of the precipices and the steep ascents were something quite appalling to a young traveller like me; but my companions rode over every thing with the greatest unconcern, confident in the sure-footedness of their horses. Having once ascended the mountains, we entered upon the arid plains of Persia, and here my master's knowledge of the country was again conspicuous. He knew every summit the moment it appeared, with the same certainty as an experienced *Frank* sailor recognizes a distant headland

* Rustam is the fabulous hero of Persian history, so much celebrated in the Shahnameh as a paragon of strength and courage. His duel with *Asfendiar*, which lasted two whole days, is the theme of Persian romance.

at sea. But he showed his sagacity most in drawing his inferences from the tracks and footsteps of animals. He could tell what sort of travellers they belonged to, whence coming, whither going, whether enemy or friend, whether laden or unladen, and what their probable numbers, with the greatest precision.

We travelled with much precaution as long as we were in the inhabited parts of the country, lying by during the day, and making all expedition at night. Our stock of provender and provisions was renewed at the last encampment of the wandering tribes which we visited before we reached the great salt desert, and when we entered it, we urged our horses on with as much haste as we knew their strength was likely to support. At length, after travelling about 120 parasangs*, we found ourselves in the environs of Ispahan. The moment for reap-

* A parasang is equivalent to about three and a half geographical miles.

ing the fruit of our fatigue, and for trying my courage, was now at hand, and my heart quite misgave me when I heard of the plan of attack which my companions proposed.

Their scheme was to enter the city through one of the unguarded avenues, which were well known to me, and at midnight to make straight for the Royal Caravanserai, where we were sure to find a great many merchants, who at this season of the year collect there with ready money to make their purchases. We were at once to carry off all the cash we could find, then to seize and gag each a merchant if we were able, that before the city could be alarmed, we might be on the road to our encampment again. I found the plan so hazardous, and so little likely to succeed, that I gave it as my opinion that we ought not to attempt it; but my master, putting on his most determined look, said to me, 'Hajjî! open your eyes—this is no child's play!—I swear by the beard of the Prophet, that if you do not behave well, I'll burn your father.—We

have succeeded before, and why should we not be as successful now?' He then ordered me to ride near him, and placed another ruffian at my side, and both vowed, if I flinched, that they would immediately run me through the body. We then took the lead, and, from my knowledge of Ispahan, I easily picked my way through the ruins which surround it, and then entered into the inhabited streets, which were at that time of night entirely forsaken. When near the scene of action, we stopped under the arches of one of the ruined houses, which are so frequently to be met with even in the most inhabited parts of the city, and dismounting from our horses, picqueted them to the ground with pegs and heel ropes*, and left them under the care of two of our men.

* A fully-equipped horseman in the east generally carries with him an iron peg, to which is affixed a rope terminated by a noose, with which he picquets his horse wherever he may alight. The rope is buttoned to the fore leg, whilst the peg is driven into the ground with a stone.

By way of precaution, we appointed a rendezvous in a lonely dell about five parasangs from Ispahan, to which it was determined we should retreat as circumstances might require. Once on foot, we proceeded without noise in a body, avoiding as much as we could the bazars, where I knew that the officers of the police kept watch, and by lanes reached the gate of the caravanserai. Here was a place, every square inch of which I knew by heart, namely, my father's shaving shop. Being aware that the gate of the caravanserai would be locked, I made the party halt there, and, taking up a stone, knocked, and called out to the doorkeeper by name: 'Ali Mohammed,' said I, 'open, open: the caravan is arrived.'

Between asleep and awake, without showing the least symptom of opening, 'What caravan?' said he.

'The caravan from Bagdad.'

'From Bagdad? why that arrived yesterday. Do you laugh at my beard?'

Seeing myself entrapped, I was obliged

to have recourse to my own name, and said, 'Why a caravan to be sure with Hajjî Baba, Kerbelai Hassan, the barber's son, who went away with Osman Aga, the Bagdad merchant. I bring the news, and expect the present.'

'What, Hajjî?' said the porter, 'he who used to shave my head so well? His place has long been empty. You are welcome.'

Upon which he began to unbolt the heavy gates of the entrance porch, which, as they creaked on their hinges, discovered a little old man in his drawers with an iron lamp in his hand, which shed enough light to show us that the place was full of merchants and their effects.

One of our party immediately seized upon him, and then we all rushed in and fell to work. Expert in these sort of attacks, my companions knew exactly where to go for plunder, and they soon took possession of all the gold and silver that was to be found; but their first object was to

secure some two or three of the richest merchants, whose ransom might be a further source of wealth to them. Ere the alarm had been spread, they had seized upon three, who from their sleeping upon fine beds, covered with shawl quilts, and reposing upon embroidered cushions, they expected would prove a good prize. These they bound hand and foot after their fashion, and forcing them away, placed them upon their best horses behind riders, who immediately retreated from the scene of action to the rendezvous.

From my knowledge of the caravanserai itself, and of the rooms which the richest merchants generally occupied, I knew where cash was to be found, and I entered one room as softly as I could (the very room which my first master had occupied), and seizing upon the small box in which the merchants generally keep their money, I made off with it.—To my joy, I found it contained a heavy bag, which I thrust into my bosom, and carried it about with me as

well as I could; although, on account of the darkness, I could not ascertain of what metal it was.

By the time we had nearly finished our operations the city had been alarmed. Almost all the people within the caravanserai, such as servants, grooms, and mule-drivers, at the first alarm had retreated to the roof; the neighbouring inhabitants then came in flocks, not knowing exactly what to do: then came the police magistrate and his officers, who also got on the roof of the caravanserai, but who only increased the uproar by their cries, exclaiming, 'Strike, seize, kill!' without in fact doing any thing to repulse the enemy. Some few shots were fired at random; but, owing to the darkness and the general confusion, we managed to steal away without any serious accident. During the fray I was frequently tempted to leave the desperate gang to which I belonged, and hide myself in some corner until they were gone; but I argued thus with myself: If I should succeed in getting away,

still my dress would discover me, and before I could explain who I really was, I should certainly fall a sacrifice to the fury of the populace, the effects of which more than once I had had occasion to witness. My father's shop was before me; the happy days I had passed in that very caravanserai were in my recollection, and I was in the act of deliberating within myself what I should do, when I felt myself roughly seized by the arm, and the first thing which I recognised on turning round was the grim face of Aslan Sultan, who threatened to kill me on the spot, if I did not render myself worthy of the confidence he had placed in me. In order to show him my prowess, I fastened upon a Persian who had just rushed by us, and, throwing him down, I exclaimed that, if he did not quietly submit to be taken prisoner and to follow me, I would put him to death. He began to make the usual lamentations, 'For the sake of Imam Hossein, by the soul of your father, by the beard of Omar, I conjure you to leave

me!' and immediately I recognised a voice that could belong to no one but my own father. By a gleam from a lantern, I discovered his well known face. It was evident, that hearing the commotion, he had left his bed to secure the property in his shop, which altogether did not consist of more than half a dozen of towels, a case of razors, soap, and a carpet. The moment I recognised him, I let go his beard, of which I had got a fast hold, and, owing to that habit of respect which we Persians show to our parents, would have kissed his hand and stood before him; but my life was in danger if I appeared to flinch, so I continued to struggle with him, and in order to show myself in earnest, pretending to beat him, I administered my blows to a mule's pack-saddle that was close to where he lay. This while I heard my father muttering to himself, "Ah, if Hajjî was here, he would not permit me to be served in this way!" which had such an effect upon me, that I immediately let him go, and ex-

claimed in Turkish to the surrounding Turcomans: ‘He won't do for us; he's only a barber.’ So without more ceremony I quitted the scene of action, mounted my horse, and retreated in full gallop through the city.

CHAPTER VI.

Concerning the three prisoners taken by the Turcomans, and of the booty made in the caravanserai.

When he had reached our place of rendezvous, we dismounted from our horses, and made a halt to rest them, and to recruit ourselves after the fatigues of the night. One of the party had not forgotten to steal a lamb as we rode along, which was soon put into a fit state to be roasted. It was cut up into small pieces, which were stuck on a ramrod, and placed over a slow fire made of what underwood we could find, mixed up with the dung of the animals, and, thus heated, was devoured most ravenously by us all.

Our next care was to ascertain the value of our prisoners. One was a tall thin man, about fifty years of age, with a sharp eye, a hollow aguish cheek, a scanty beard,

wearing a pair of silken drawers, and a shawl under-coat. The other was a short round man, of a middle age, with a florid face, dressed in a dark vest, buttoning over his breast, and looked like an officer of the law. The third was stout and hairy, of rough aspect, of a strong vigorous form, and who was bound with more care than the others on account of the superior resistance which he had made.

After we had finished our meal, and distributed the remains of it to the prisoners, we called them before us, and questioned them as to their professions and situations in life. The tall thin man, upon whose rich appearance the Turcomans founded their chief hope, was first examined, and as I was the only one of our party who could talk Persian, I stood interpreter. 'Who and what are you?' said Aslan Sultan. 'I,' said the prisoner, in a very subdued voice, 'I beg to state, for the good of your service, that I am nothing—I am a poor man.'

'What's your business?'

'I am a poet, at your service: what can I do more?'

'A poet!' cried one of the roughest of the Turcomans; 'what is that good for?'

'Nothing,' answered Aslan Sultan, in a rage; 'he won't fetch ten tomauns*; poets are always poor, and live upon what they can cozen from others. Who will ransom a poet? But if you are so poor,' said Aslan Sultan, 'how do you come by those rich clothes?'

'They are part of a dress of honour,' returned the poet, 'which was lately conferred upon me by the Prince of Shiraz, for having written some verses in his praise.'

Upon which the clothes were taken from him, a sheep-skin cloak given to him in return, and he was dismissed for the present. Then came the short man. 'Who are you?' said the chief: 'what is your profession?'

'I am a poor Cadi,' answered the other.

* A tomaun is the principal gold coin of Persia, worth about 14*s*.

'How came you to sleep in a fine bed, if you are poor?' said his interrogator. 'You father of a dog, if you lie, we'll take your head off! Confess that you are rich! All Cadies are rich: they live by selling themselves to the highest bidder.'

'I am the Cadi of Galadoun, at your service,' said the prisoner. 'I was ordered to Ispahan by the governor to settle for the rent of a village which I occupy.'

'Where is the money for your rent?' said Aslan.

'I came to say,' answered the Cadi, 'that I had no money to give, for that the locusts had destroyed all my last year's crops, and that there had been a want of water.'

'Then after all, what is this fellow worth?' said one of the gang.

'He is worth a good price,' replied the chief, 'if he happens to be a good Cadi, for then the peasants may wish him back again; but if not, a *dînar** is too much for him.

* The *dînar* is the smallest denomination of money in Persia.

We must keep him:—perhaps he is of more value than a merchant would be. But let us see how much this other fellow is likely to fetch.'

They then brought the rough man before them, and Aslan Sultan questioned him in the usual manner—'What are you?'

'I am a *ferash*,' (a carpet spreader) said he, in a very sulky manner.

'A *ferash*!' cried out the whole gang—'a ferash! The fellow lies! How came you to sleep in a fine bed?' said one.

'It was not mine,' he answered, 'it was my master's.'

'He lies! he lies!' they all cried out: 'he is a merchant—you are a merchant. Own it, or we'll put you to death.'

In vain he asserted that he was only a carpet-spreader, nobody believed him, and he received so many blows from different quarters, that at last he was obliged to roar out that he was a merchant.

But I, who judged from the appearance of the man that he could not be a merchant,

but that he was what he owned himself to be, assured my companions that they had got but a sorry prize in him, and advised them to release him; but immediately I was assailed in my turn with a thousand maledictions, and was told, that if I chose to take part with my countrymen, I should share their fate, and become a slave again —so I was obliged to keep my peace, and permit the ruffians to have their own way.

Their speculation in man-stealing having proved so unfortunate, they were in no very good humour with their excursion, and there was a great difference of opinion amongst them, what should be done with such worthless prisoners. Some were for keeping the Cadi, and killing the poet and the ferash, and others for preserving the Cadi for ransom, and making the ferash a slave; but all seemed to be for killing the poet.

I could not help feeling much compassion for this man, who in fact appeared to be from his manners, and general deportment,

a man of consequence, although he had pleaded poverty; and seeing it likely to go very hard with him, I said, 'What folly are you about to commit! Kill the poet! why it will be worse than killing the goose with the golden egg. Don't you know that poets are sometimes very rich, and can, if they choose, become rich at all times, for they carry their wealth in their head? Did you never hear of the king who gave a famous poet a *miscal** of gold for every stanza which he composed? Is not the same thing said of the present Shah? and—who knows? —perhaps your prisoner may be the King's poet himself.'

'Is that the case?' said one of the gang; 'then let him make stanzas for us immediately, and if they don't fetch a miscal each, he shall die.'

'Make on! make on!' exclaimed the whole of them to the poet, elated by so bright a prospect of gain; 'if you don't, we'll cut your tongue out.'

* Twenty-four grains make one miscal.

At length it was decided that all three should be preserved, and that as soon as they had made a division of the booty, we should return to the plains of Kipchâk.

Aslan then called us together, and every man was obliged to produce what he had stolen. Some brought bags of silver and others gold. Nor did they confine themselves to money only; gold heads of pipes, a silver ewer, a sable pelisse, shawls, and a variety of other things, were brought before us. When it came to my turn, I produced the heaviest bag of tomauns that had yet been given in, which secured to me the applause of the whole company.

'Well done! well done! Hajjî,' said they all to me; 'he has become a good Turcoman: we could not have done better ourselves.'

My master in particular was very loud in his praises, and said, 'Hajjî, my son, by my own soul, by the head of my father, I swear that you have done bravely, and I will give you one of my slaves for a wife,

and you shall live with us—and you shall have a tent of your own, with twenty sheep, and we 'll have a wedding, when I will give an entertainment to all the encampment.'

These words sunk deep in my mind, and only strengthened my resolution to escape on the very first opportunity; but in the mean while I was very intent upon the division of the spoil which was about to be made, as I hoped to be included for a considerable portion of it. To my great mortification they gave me not a single dînar. In vain I exclaimed, in vain I entreated; all I could hear was, 'If you say a word more, we will cut your head off.' So I was obliged to console myself with my original fifty ducats, whilst my companions were squabbling about their shares. At length it became a scene of general contention, and would have finished by bloodshed, if a thought had not struck one of the combatants, who exclaimed, 'We have got a Cadi here; why should we dispute? He shall decide between us.'

So immediately the poor Cadi was set in the midst of them, and was made to legislate upon goods, part of which belonged in fact to himself, without even getting the per centage due to him as judge.

CHAPTER VII.

Hajji Baba evinces a feeling disposition—History of the poet Asker.

We made our retreat by the same road we came, but not with the same expedition, on account of our prisoners. They sometimes walked, and sometimes rode.

The general appearance of the poet had, from the first moment, interested me in his misfortunes; and being a smatterer in learning myself, my vanity, perhaps, was flattered with the idea of becoming the protector of a man of letters in distress. Without appearing to show any particular partiality to him, I succeeded in being appointed to keep watch over him, under the plea that I would compel him to make verses; and conversing in our language, we were able

to communicate with each other with great freedom without the fear of being understood. I explained my situation, and informed him of my intentions to escape, and assured him that I would do every thing in my power to be useful to him. He seemed delighted to meet with kind words, where he expected nothing but ill treatment; and when I had thus acquired his confidence, he did not scruple to talk to me freely about himself and his concerns. I discovered what I had before suspected, that he was a man of consequence, for he was no less a personage than the court poet, enjoying the title of *Melek al Shoherah*, or the Prince of Poets. He was on his road from Shiraz (whither he had been sent by the Shah on business) to Tehran, and had that very day reached Ispahan, when he had fallen into our hands. In order to beguile the tediousness of the road through the Salt Desert, after I had related my adventures, I requested him to give me an account of his, which he did in the following words:

'I was born in the city of Kerman, and my name is Asker. My father was for a long time governor of that city, during the reign of the eunuch Aga Mohammed Shah; and although the intrigues that were set on foot against him to deprive him of his government were very mischievous, still such was his respectability, that his enemies never entirely prevailed against him. His eyes were frequently in danger, but his adroitness preserved them; and he had at last the good fortune to die peaceably in his bed in the present Shah's reign. I was permitted to possess the property which he left, which amounted to about 10,000 tomauns. In my youth I was remarkable for the attention which I paid to my studies, and before I had arrived at the age of sixteen I was celebrated for writing a fine hand. I knew Hafiz entirely by heart, and had myself acquired such a facility in making verses, that I might almost have been said to speak in numbers. There was no subject that I did not attempt. I wrote on

the loves of Leilah* and Majnoun; I never heard the note of a nightingale, but I made it pour out its loves to the rose; and wherever I went I never failed to produce my poetry and chant it out in the assembly. At this time the king was waging war with Sadik Khan, a pretender to the throne, and a battle was fought, in which his majesty commanded in person, and which terminated in the defeat of the rebel. I immediately sang the king's praises. In describing the contest I made Rustam appear standing in a cloud over the field of battle; who seeing the king lay about him desperately, exclaims to himself, 'Lucky wight am I to be here instead of below, for certainly I should never escape from *his* blows.' I also exerted my wit, and was much extolled when I said, that Sadik Khan and his troops ought not to repine after all; for

* The loves of these personages has been treated by various oriental writers. Majnoun is looked upon as the model of a lover, and Leilah as the most beautiful and perfect of her sex.

although they were vanquished, yet still the king, in his magnanimity, had exalted their heads to the skies. In this, I alluded to a pillar of skulls which his majesty had caused to be erected of the heads of the vanquished. These sayings of mine were reported to the Shah, and he was pleased to confer upon me the highest honour which a poet can receive; namely, causing my mouth to be filled with gold coin in the presence of the whole court, at the great audience. This led to my advancement: and I was appointed to attend at court, and to write verses on all occasions. In order to show my zeal, I represented to the king, that as in former times our great Ferdousi had written his *Shah Nameh*, or the History of the Kings, it behoved him, who was greater than any monarch Persia ever possessed, to have a poet who should celebrate his reign; and I entreated permission to write a *Shahin Shah Nameh*, or the History of the King of Kings; to which his majesty was most graciously pleased to

give his consent. One of my enemies at court was the lord high treasurer, who, without any good reason, wanted to impose upon me a fine of 12,000 tomauns, which the king, on the plea that I was the first poet of the age, would not allow. It happened one day, that in a large assembly, the subject of discussion was the liberality of Mahmoud Shah Ghaznevi to Ferdousi, who gave him a miscal of gold for every couplet in the Shah Nameh. Anxious that the king should hear what I was about to say, I exclaimed: 'The liberality of his present majesty is equal to that of Mahmoud Shah—equal did I say?—nay greater; because in the one case, it was exercised towards the most celebrated poet of Persia; and in my case, it is exercised towards the humble individual now before you.'

'All the company were anxious to hear how and when such great favours had been conferred upon me. 'In the first place,' said I, 'when my father died, he left a property of 10,000 tomauns; the king per-

mitted me to inherit it; he might have taken it away—there are 10,000 tomauns. Then the lord high treasurer wanted to fine me 12,000 tomauns; the king did not allow it—there are 12,000 more. Then the rest is made up of what I have subsisted upon ever since I have been in the Shah's service, and so my sum is made out.' And then I took to my exclamations of 'May the king live for ever!—may his shadow never be less!—may he conquer all his enemies!'—all of which I flattered myself was duly reported to his majesty: and some days after I was invested with a dress of honour, consisting of a brocade coat, a shawl for the waist, and one for the head, and a brocade cloak trimmed with fur. I was also honoured with the title of Prince of Poets, by virtue of a royal firman, which, according to the usual custom, I wore in my cap for three successive days, receiving the congratulations of my friends, and feeling of greater consequence than I had ever done before. I wrote a poem, which answered

the double purpose of gratifying my revenge for the ill treatment I had received from the lord high treasurer, and of conciliating his good graces; for it had a double meaning all through: what he in his ignorance mistook for praise, was in fact satire; and as he thought that the high-sounding words in which it abounded (which, being mostly Arabic, he did not understand) must contain an eulogium, he did not in the least suspect, that they were in fact expressions containing the grossest disrespect. In truth, I had so cloked my meaning, that, without my explanation, it would have been difficult for any one to have discovered it. But it was not alone in poetry that I excelled. I had a great turn for mechanics, and several of my inventions were much admired at court. I contrived a wheel for perpetual motion, which only wants one little addition to make it go round for ever. I made different sorts of coloured paper; I invented a new sort of ink-stand; and was on the

high road to making cloth, when I was stopped by his majesty, who said to me, 'Asker, stick to your poetry: whenever I want cloth, my merchants bring it from Europe.' And I obeyed his instructions; for on the approaching festival of the new year's-day, when it is customary for each of his servants to make him a present, I wrote something so happy about a tooth-pick, which I presented in a handsome case, that the principal noblemen of the court, at the great public audience of that sacred day, were ordered to kiss me on the mouth for my pains. I compared his majesty's teeth to pearls, and the tooth-pick to the pearl-diver; his gums to a coral-bank, near which pearls are frequently found; and the long beard and mustachios that encircled the mouth to the undulations of the ocean. I was complimented by every body present upon the fertility of my imagination: I was assured that Ferdousi was a downright ass when compared to me. By such means, I enjoyed great favour with the Shah; and

his majesty being anxious to give me an opportunity of acquiring wealth as well as honours, appointed me to be the bearer of the usual annual dress of honour which he sends to his son, the prince of the province of Fars. I was received at Shiraz with the greatest distinctions, and presents were made to me to a considerable amount; which, in addition to what I had levied from the villages on the road, made a handsome sum. The event of last night has deprived me of all: all has been stolen from me, and here you see me the most miserable of human beings. If you do not manage to help me to escape, I fear that I shall die a prisoner. Perhaps the king may be anxious to release me, but certainly he will never pay one farthing for my ransom. The lord high treasurer is not my friend; and since I told the grand vizier, that with all his wisdom he did not know how to wind up a watch, much less how it was made, I fear that he also will not care for my loss. The money, with which I might have pur-

chased my ransom, the barbarians have taken; and where to procure a similar sum I know not. It is my fate to have fallen into this disaster, therefore I must not repine; but let me entreat you, as you are a fellow Mussulman—as you hate Omar, and love Ali—let me entreat you to help me in my distress.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Hajji Baba escapes from the Turcomans. The meaning of 'falling from the frying-pan into the fire' illustrated.

As soon as the poet had finished his narrative, I assured him that I would do every thing in my power to serve him; but I recommended patience to him for the present, as I had not yet devised the means of procuring my own liberty, and foresaw great difficulties in saving him at the same time. It would be impossible to evade the watchfulness of our masters, as long as we were in the open desert: their horses were as good as mine, and they were much better acquainted with the country than I was. To run away from them under these circumstances would be madness; therefore

it was only left us to watch any opportunity that might be given us of escape.

We had reached the limits of the Salt Desert, and were about crossing the high road that leads from Tehran to Meshed, about twenty parasangs to the east of Damgan, when Aslan Sultan made a halt, and proposed that we should remain concealed for a day in the broken ground that borders the road, in the hopes that fortune might throw us in the way of a passing caravan, which it was his intention that we should pillage. At the very dawn of the following day, a spy, who had been stationed on an adjacent hill, came in great haste to report that he saw clouds of dust rising in the direction of Damgan, and approaching towards us, on the road leading to Meshed.

Immediately we were all upon the alert. The Turcomans left their prisoners, bound hand and foot, on the spot where we had rested, with the intention of returning to take them up as soon as we should have rifled the caravan, and, fully equipped, we

sallied forth with great caution, determined on blood and plunder.

Aslan himself proceeded before the rest, in order to reconnoitre; and calling me to him, said, 'Now, Hajjî, here is an opportunity for distinguishing yourself. You shall accompany me; and you will observe the precautions I use previous to showing our whole body, which it may be necessary for you to know, in order that you may be able to conduct such an enterprise yourself on some future occasion. I take you with me, in case I should be obliged to use an interpreter; for frequently in these caravans, there is not a person who understands our language. We will approach as near as we can, perhaps have a parley with the conductor, and if we cannot make terms with him, we will fall on with our whole party.'

As the travellers approached, I perceived that Aslan Sultan became uneasy. 'This is no caravan, I fear,' said he; 'they march in too compact a body: besides, I hear no

bells; the dust is too great in one spot. I see spears!—it is an immense cavalcade—five led horses!—this is no game for us.'

In fact, as they approached, it was easy to discover that it was no caravan, but some great personage, the governor of a province at least, who was travelling, attended by a numerous escort of horsemen and servants, and with all the pomp and glitter usual on such occasions.

My heart leaped within me when I saw this, for here was an excellent opportunity for escape. Could I approach near enough to be taken prisoner by them, without exciting any previous suspicion in my master, I should be safe; and although I might be ill treated at first, still I trusted to my eloquence to make my story believed. Accordingly, I said to my companion, 'Let us approach nearer;' and, without waiting for his permission, I excited my horse onwards. He immediately followed, with an intention of stopping me; but we had no sooner cleared the small elevated ground

behind which we had posted ourselves, than we came in full view of the whole party, and were scarcely a bow shot from them. As soon as we were discovered, some six or seven of their best horsemen were detached from the rest of the body, and, at the fullest speed of their horses, came towards us. We turned about to fly: as much as Aslan urged on his steed, so much did I restrain mine; and by this manœuvre I was very soon overtaken and seized. To be knocked off my horse, disarmed, plundered of my fifty ducats, my razors and all my other effects, was but the business of a few seconds; and although I assured my new masters that I was in no intention to leave them, still they persisted in tying my arms behind me, with my own shawl, which they took from round my waist for that purpose. Thus pinioned, and receiving blows every now and then, because I did not move fast enough, I was dragged before their chief, who had made a halt, surrounded by his attendants.

From the sort of attentions which he received, and the low inclinations of the body that were made before him, I imagined that he must be a royal personage, and I was soon informed as much, when I came near; for several blows on the head were given me, as hints to make me prostrate myself before a *shahzadeh*, or prince. A large circle being made, he ordered me to be released, and, as soon as I felt myself free, at one bound I disengaged myself from those near me, and seizing upon the skirt of his cloak, as he was seated on his horse, exclaimed, '*Penah be shahzadeh!* protection from the prince.' One of the guards rushed forward to punish my audacity; but the prince would not allow the sacred custom to be infringed, and promised me his protection. Ordering his servants not to molest me, he, at the same time, commanded me to relate how I came to be placed in the predicament in which I now stood.

Falling on my knees, and kissing the

ground, I related my story in as concise a manner as possible; and, to corroborate all that I had said, added, that if he would order his horsemen to attack the party of Turcomans, who still were close at hand, they might release the king's poet, with two other Persians, who were prisoners in their hands, and they would fully confirm all that I had asserted.

I had no sooner said this than the horsemen, who had pursued Aslan Sultan, returned, with looks of great dismay, swearing by Ali and by the head of the king, that an immense body of Turcomans, at least 1000 strong, were marching down upon us, and that the prince must prepare to fight. In vain I explained to them that they were only twenty in number,—nobody would believe me; I was treated as a spy and a liar, and every one said that if the Turcomans did attack, they would put me to death on the spot. The party then proceeded onwards at a good pace, look-

ing about in all directions for the expected enemy, and betraying all those symptoms of apprehension which the very name of Turcoman excites throughout the whole of Persia.

My own horse had been taken from me, and I was permitted to ride upon a baggage mule, where I had time to ponder over my wretched fate and miserable prospects. Without a farthing in my pocket, without a friend, I saw nothing before me but starvation. I had not yet become a sufficiently good Mussulman to receive comfort from predestination, and I absolutely sobbed aloud at my own folly, for having voluntarily been the cause of my present misery. That fond partiality for my own countrymen, which used to predominate so powerfully in my breast when I was a prisoner, entirely forsook me here, and I cursed them aloud.

'You call yourselves Mussulmans!' said I to those around me: 'you have not the

feelings of dogs. Dogs did I say? You are worse than christian dogs—the Turcomans are men compared to you.'

Then when I found that this sort of language only produced laughter in my auditors, I tried what entreaty would do. 'For the love of Imam Hossein, for the sake of the Prophet, by the souls of your children, why do you treat a stranger thus? Am I not a Mussulman like yourselves? What have I done that I should be made to devour this grief? I sought refuge amongst you as friends, and I am thrust away as an enemy.'

For all this I got no consolation, excepting from an old muleteer, by name Ali Katir, who had just lighted his *kalian*, or water pipe, and giving it to me to smoke, said, 'My son, every thing in this world is in the hand of God.'—Pointing to the mule upon which he rode, he added, 'If God has made this animal white, can Ali Katir make it black? It one day gets a feed of

corn; on the next it browzes upon a thistle. Can we contend with fate? Smoke your pipe now and be happy, and be thankful that it is no worse with you. Hafiz says, 'Every moment of pleasure that you enjoy, account it gain:—who can say what will be the event of any thing?'

This speech of the muleteer soothed me a little, and as he found that I was as well versed in Hafiz as he, and not backward in permitting myself to be comforted, he treated me with much kindness, and made me a partaker of his mess during the remainder of the journey. He informed me that 'the prince, into whose hands I had fallen, was the Shah's fifth son, who had lately been installed in the government of the province of Khorassan, and was now on his road to Meshed, the seat of his jurisdiction. He was escorted by a greater number of attendants than ordinary, on account of the alarming state of the Turcoman frontier, and it was said

that he had instructions to commence very active operations against that people, as many of whose heads as possible he was invited to send to Tehran, to be piled up before the gate of the royal palace; and you may account yourself very fortunate,' added the muleteer, 'that yours was not taken off your shoulders. Had you happened to be fair, with little eyes, and without much hair, instead of being a dark man, as you are, you certainly would have been put to death, and your head have been pickled, and made to pass for that of a Turcoman.'

When we had reached our resting-place at night, which was a lonely caravanserai half in ruins, situated on the skirts of the desert, I determined to endeavour to procure admittance to the prince, and to make an effort to regain my fifty ducats, and my horse and arms, which I made no scruple in claiming as my own, notwithstanding a certain little voice within me, which told me that another had almost as much right to them as I had. I accordingly watched

an opportunity, just before the evening prayer, of presenting myself to him. He was seated on a carpet that had been spread on the terrace of the caravanserai, reposing himself on his cushion, and before his attendants had time to beat me off, I exclaimed, '*Arzi darum*, I have a petition to make.' Upon which he ordered me to approach, and asked me what I wanted? I complained of the treatment I had received from his servants who had first seized me—related how they had robbed me of my fifty ducats; and then entreated that my horse and arms might be restored to me. He inquired of those surrounding him who the men were that I complained of, and when their names were mentioned, he sent his chief tent-pitcher to conduct them to him. As soon as they appeared, for they were two, I recognized the aggressors, and affirmed them to be such to the prince.

'Sons of dogs,' said he to them, 'where is the money you stole from this man?'

'We took nothing,' they immediately exclaimed.

'We shall soon see that,' answered he. 'Call the *ferashes*,' said he to one of his officers, 'and let them beat the rogues on the soles of their feet till they produce the fifty ducats.'

They were immediately seized, and when their feet were in the air, strongly tied in the noose, and after receiving a few blows, they confessed that they had taken the money, and produced it.—It was forthwith carried to the prince, who deliberately counted it over, and, putting it under the cushion upon which he was reclining, released the culprits, and said in a loud voice to me, 'You are dismissed.' I stood with my mouth wide open, hoping to see the money handed over to me, when his master of the ceremonies took me by the shoulders and pushed me away. I exclaimed, 'And my money, where is it?

'What does he say?' said the prince: 'give him the shoe if he speaks again.'—

When the master of the ceremonies, taking off his high green slipper, struck me over the mouth with the heel of it, shod with iron, saying, 'Do you speak to a king's son thus? Go in peace, and keep your eyes open, or you'll have your ears cut off;'—and so I was pushed and dragged violently away.

I returned in utter despair to my muleteer, who appeared not in the least surprised at what had happened, and said, 'What could you expect more? After all, is he not a prince? When once he or any man in power gets possession of a thing, do you think that they will ever restore it? You might as well expect a mule to give up a mouthful of fresh grass, when once it has got it within its mouth, as a prince to give up money that has once been in his hands.'

CHAPTER IX.

Hajji Baba, in his distress, becomes a saka, or water-carrier.

We reached Meshed in due time, and the prince made his solemn entry amidst all the noise, parade, and confusion, attendant upon such ceremonies. I found myself a solitary being, in a strange city, distant from my friends, and from any creature to whom I might look for assistance, and without even a pair of razors to comfort me. When I looked at my present means, I found that they consisted of five tomauns,—which I had managed to secrete from the sack I had stolen in the caravanserai, and which I had put between the lining of my cap—of a brown woollen coat, of a sheep-skin jacket, a shirt, a pair of trowsers, and a heavy pair of boots. I

had lived upon the muleteer as long as he enjoyed the daily allowance of provisions that he received during the time when he was attached to the suite of the prince; but now that he and his mules were discharged, I could not expect that he should continue to support me. I thought of again taking to my profession; but who would trust their throats to a man who had the reputation of being a Turcoman spy? Besides, although I might purchase razors, yet my means were not large enough to set up a shop, and I was determined not to become a journeyman.

My friend, the muleteer, who knew the ways and means of Meshed, recommended me strongly to become a *saka*, or water-carrier. 'You are young, and strong,' said he: 'you have a good voice, and would entice people to drink by an harmonious cry. You have besides a great talent for cant and palaver, and for laughing at one's beard. The number of pilgrims who come to Meshed to perform

their devotions at the tomb of the Imâm is great, and, charity being one of the principal instruments which they use for the salvation of their souls, they give freely to those who promise them the best reward. You must sell each draught in the name and for the sake of Imam Hossein, our favourite saint. Always offer it gratis; but be sure you get money in hand before you pour it out; and when your customer has drunk, say, with great emphasis, 'May your draught be propitious! May the holy Imam take you under his protection! May you never suffer the thirst of the blessed Hossein!' and such like sort of speeches, which you must chant out so loud that every body may hear you. In short, to devotees who come some hundreds of parasangs to say their prayers, you may say any thing and every thing, and you will be sure to be believed. I myself have been a *saka* at Meshed, and know the trade. It has enabled me to buy a string of mules, and to be the man you see.'

I followed my friend's advice. I forthwith laid out my money in buying a leather sack, with a brass cock, which I slung round my body, and also a bright drinking cup. After having filled my sack with water, and let it soak for some time, in order to do away the bad smell of the leather, I sallied forth, and proceeded to the tomb, where I immediately began my operations. The cry I adopted was 'Water, water! in the name of the Imâm, water.' This I chanted with all the force and swell of my lungs, and having practised under the tuition of the muleteer for two days before, I was assured that I acquitted myself as well as the oldest practitioners. As soon as I appeared, I immediately drew the attention of the other sakas, who seemed to question the right I had to exercise their profession. When I showed myself at the reservoir, to draw water, they would have quarrelled with me, and one attempted to push me in; but they found I was resolute, and that my resolution was

backed by a set of strong and active limbs, and therefore confined themselves to abusive language, of which being the entire master, I soon got the lead, and completely silenced them. Nature, in fact, seemed to have intended me for a saka. The water which I had a moment before drawn from a filthy reservoir, I extolled as having flowed from a spring created by Ali in person, equal to the sacred well of *Zem Zem*, and a branch of the river which flows through Paradise. It is inconceivable how it was relished, and how considerable was the money I received for giving it gratis. I was always on the watch to discover when a new set of pilgrims should arrive, and before they had even alighted from their mules, all dusty from the road, and all happy at having escaped the Turcomans, I plied them in the name of the Prophet with a refreshing draught, and made them recollect that, this being the first devotional

act which they performed on reaching Meshed, so out of gratitude for their safe arrival, they ought to reward me liberally; and my admonitions were scarcely ever disregarded.

The commemoration of the death of Hossein, which is so religiously kept throughout Persia, was now close at hand, and I determined to put myself into training to appear as the water-carrier, who on the last day of the festival, which is held the most sacred, performs a conspicuous character in the tragedy. This was to be acted in public before the prince in the great open square of the city, and I expected to acquire much reputation and profit from the feat of strength which I should perform, which consists of carrying an immense sack full of water on the back, accompanied by additional exertions. I had a rival, who accomplished the task on the last festival; but as the sack I was about to carry contained infinitely more

water than he could support, my claim to superiority was not to be disputed. However I was advised to be on my guard, for he was of a jealous character, and would not lose an opportunity of doing me an injury if he could. When the day arrived, the prince being seated in an upper room situated over the gate of his palace, and the whole population of the city assembled to witness the religious ceremonies, I appeared naked to the waist, with my body streaming with blood, slowly walking under the weight of my immense sack. Having reached the window at which the prince was seated, I attracted his notice by loud exclamations for his happiness and prosperity. He threw me down a gold coin, and expressed himself pleased with my performance. In my exultation I invited several boys, who were near at hand for the purpose, to pile themselves upon my load, which they did, to the astonishment of the crowd, who encouraged me by their cries and applause. I called for another boy,

when my rival, who had watched his opportunity, sprung forwards and mounted himself on the very top of all, hoping, no doubt, to crush me: but, exerting myself to the utmost of my strength, I carried by burthen clean off, amidst the animating shouts of the staring multitude. But although in the heat of the exertion I felt no inconvenience, yet when I was disencumbered I found that my back was sprained so severely, that I was totally unfitted for the trade of a water-carrier for the future. I therefore sold my sack and other articles, and, with the money that I had gained in water-selling, found myself well off, compared to the deplorable situation in which I was on my arrival at Meshed. My friend the muleteer had departed some time before the festival with a caravan for Tehran, so I was deprived of his counsels. I should have demanded justice for the injury done me by my rival, and might have dragged him before the cadi; but I was assured that in the Mohamedan law there is no provision

made for a sprain. It is written an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but there is no sprain for a sprain. Had I had some powerful protector, who would have prosecuted the business for me, perhaps I might have got redress; but a miserable creature like myself, unknown and unfriended, I could have gained nothing, and should perhaps have stood a chance of losing the little money I had acquired.

CHAPTER X.

He makes a soliloquy, and becomes an itinerant vender of smoke.

I HELD a consultation with myself as to what I should do next for my livelihood. Various walks in life were open to me. The begging line was an excellent one in Meshed, and, judging from my success as a water-carrier, I should very soon have been at the head of the profession. I might also have become a *lûti**, and kept a bear; but it required some apprenticeship to learn the tricks of the one, and to know how to tame the other: so I gave that up. Still I might have followed my own profession, and have taken a shop; but I could not bear the

* The *lûties* are privileged buffoons, usually keeping monkeys, bears, and other animals.

thoughts of settling, particularly in so remote a town as Meshed. At length I followed the bent of my inclination, and, as I was myself devotedly fond of smoking, I determined to become an itinerant seller of smoke. Accordingly I bought pipes of various sizes, a wooden tray, containing the pipe-heads, which was strapped round my waist, an iron pot for fire, which I carried in my hand, a pair of iron pincers, a copper jug for water, that was suspended by a hook behind my back, and some long bags for my tobacco. All these commodities were fastened about my body, and when I was fully equipped, I might be said to look like a porcupine with all its quills erect. My tobacco was of various sorts—Tabas, Shiraz, Susa, and Damascus. It is true that I was not very scrupulous about giving it pure; for with a very small quantity of the genuine leaf I managed to make a large store, with the assistance of different sorts of dungs. I had a great tact in discovering amongst my customers the real con-

noisseur, and to him I gave it almost genuine. My whole profits, in fact, depended upon my discrimination of characters. To those of the middling ranks, I gave it half-mixed; to the lower sort, three-quarters; and to the lowest, almost without any tobacco at all. Whenever I thought I could perceive a wry face, I immediately exerted my ingenuity in favour of the excellence of my tobacco. I showed specimens of the good, descanted on its superior qualities, and gave the history of the very gardener who had reared it, and pledged myself to point out the very spot in his grounds where it grew.

I became celebrated in Meshed for the excellence of my pipes. My principal customer was a dervish, who was so great a connoisseur that I never dared to give him any but pure tobacco; and although I did not gain much by his custom, as he was not very exact in his payments, yet his conversation was so agreeable, and he recommended so many of his friends to me, that

I cultivated his good will to the utmost of my power.

Dervish Sefer (for that was his name) was a man of a peculiar aspect. He had a large aquiline nose, piercing black eyes, a thick beard, and a great quantity of jet black hair flowing over his shoulders. His conical cap was embroidered all over with sentences from the Koran, and holy invocations: the skin of a red deer was fastened loosely upon his back, with the hairy side outwards: he bore in hand a long steel staff, which he generally carried on his shoulder, and in the other a calabash, suspended by three chains, which he extended whenever he deigned to ask the charity of passengers. In his girdle he wore large agate clasps, from which hung a quantity of heavy wooden beads; and, as he swung himself along through the streets and bazars, there was so much of wildness and solicitude in all his words and actions, that he did not fail to inspire a certain awe in all beholders. This, I afterwards

learnt, was put on, in order to suit the character which he had adopted; for when he smoked my pipes, if no one chanced to be present, he was the most natural and unreserved of beings. Our acquaintance soon improved into intimacy, and at length he introduced me into a small circle of dervishes, men of his own turn and profession, with whom he lived almost exclusively, and I was invited to frequent their meetings. It is true that this did not suit my views in the smoking line, for they amongst them consumed more of my good tobacco than all the rest of my other customers put together; but their society was so agreeable that I could not resist the temptation.

Dervish Sefer, one evening when we had smoked more than usual, said to me, 'Hajjî Baba, you are too much of a man to be a seller of smoke all your life:—why do you not turn dervish, like us? We hold men's beards as cheap as dirt; and although our existence is precarious, yet it is one of great variety, as well as of great idleness. We

look upon mankind as fair game—we live upon their weakness and credulity; and, from what I have seen of you, I think you would do honour to our profession, and in time become as celebrated as even the famous Sheikh Saadi himself.' This speech was applauded by the other two, who pressed my entering upon their profession. I was nothing loath, but I pleaded my ignorance of the necessary qualifications. 'How is it possible,' said I, 'that a being so ignorant and unexperienced as I am can at once attain to all the learning requisite for a dervish? I know how to read and write, 'tis true; I have gone through the Koran, and have my Hafiz and Saadi nearly by heart; besides which, I have read a great part of the Shah Nameh of Ferdûsi, but beyond that I am totally ignorant.' 'Ah, my friend,' said Dervish Sefer, 'little do you know of dervishes, and still less of human-kind. It is not great learning that is required to make a dervish: assurance is the first ingredient. With one-fiftieth part

of the accomplishments that you have mentioned, and with only a common share of effrontery, I promise you, that you may command not only the purses, but even the lives of your hearers. By impudence I have been a prophet, by impudence I have wrought miracles, by impudence I have restored the dying to health—by impudence, in short, I lead a life of great ease, and am feared and respected by those who, like you, do not know what dervishes are. If I chose to give myself the trouble, and incur the risks which Mahomed himself did, I might even now become as great a prophet as he. It would be as easy for me to cut the moon in two with my finger as it was for him, provided I once made my hearers have confidence in me; and impudence will do that, and more, if exerted in a proper manner.' When Dervish Sefer had done talking, his companions applauded what he had said, and they related so many curious anecdotes of the feats which they had performed, that I became very anxious to know more of

these extraordinary men. They promised to relate the history of their lives at our next meeting, and, in the mean while, recommended me strongly to turn my thoughts to a line of life more dignified, and fuller of enjoyment, than that of a vagabond seller of adulterated smoke.

CHAPTER XI.

History of Dervish Sefer, and of the two other dervishes.

When we had again collected ourselves together, each with a pipe in his hand, seated with our backs against the wall, in a room, the window of which opened into a small square planted with flowers, Dervish Sefer, as the acknowledged chief of our society, began his story in the following words:—

'I am the son of the Lûti Bashi, or head Merry-Andrew of the Prince of Shiraz, by a celebrated courtezan of the name of *Taous*, or the Peacock. With such parents, I leave you to imagine the education which I received. My principal associates, during my infancy, were the monkeys and bears that belonged to my father and his friends, and,

perhaps, it is to the numerous tricks in which they were instructed, and to the facility with which they learnt them, that I am indebted for the talent of mimickry that has been of so much use to me through life. At fifteen I was an accomplished lûti. I could eat fire, spout water, and perform all sorts of sleight of hand, and I should very probably have continued to prosper in this profession, had not the daughter of the prince's general of camel artillery become enamoured of me, as I danced on the tight-rope before the court on the festival of the new year's day. A young camel-driver under his orders had a sister who served in the harem of the general: he was my most intimate friend, and his sister gave him the intelligence of the effect my appearance had produced upon her mistress. I immediately went to a mîrza or scribe, who lived in a small shed in a corner of the bazar, and requested of him to write a love letter for me, with as much red ink in it as possible, and crossed and re-crossed with all the com-

plication he could devise. Nothing could be better than this composition—for at the very outset it informed my mistress that I was dead, and that my death was owing to the fire of her eyes, that had made roast meat of my heart. Notwithstanding this assertion, I ventured at the end to say that as I had never yet seen her, I hoped that she would contrive to grant me an interview. In the joy of my heart for the possession of such a letter, in great confidence I told the scribe who my charmer was, which he had no sooner heard, than hoping to receive a present for his trouble, he went forthwith and informed the general himself of the fact. That the son of the *Lûti Bashi* should dare to look up to the daughter of *Zambûrekchi Bashi* was a crime not to be forgiven, and as the latter had influence at court, he procured an order for my instant removal from Shiraz. My father did not wish to incur the prince's displeasure, and fearing, from my growing celebrity, that I should very soon rival him in his own pro-

fession, rather urged than delayed my departure. On the morning when I was about quitting Shiraz, and was bidding adieu to my friends the monkeys, bears, and other animals under his care, he said to me, 'Sefer, my son, I should be sorry to part with you; but with the education which you have received, and the peculiar advantages which you have had of living almost entirely in the society of me and my beasts, it is impossible but that you will succeed in life. I now endow you with what will ensure you a rapid fortune. I give you my chief ape, the most accomplished of his species. Make a friend of him for your own sake, and love him for mine; and I hope in time that you will reach the eminence to which your father has attained.' Upon this he placed the animal upon my shoulder, and thus accompanied I left the paternal roof.

'I took the road to Ispahan, in no very agreeable mood, for I scarcely knew whether to be happy or sorry for this change in my circumstances. A monkey and inde-

pendence were certainly delightful things; but to leave my associates, and the places that were endeared to me from my infancy, and, above all, to abandon that fair unknown, whom my imagination had pictured to me as lovely as *Shireen* herself, were circumstances which appeared to me so distressing, that by the time I had reached the hut of the dervish, at the *Teng Allah Akbar*, my mind sank into a miserable fit of despondency. I seated myself on a stone, near the hut, and, with my monkey by my side, I gave vent to my grief in a flood of tears, exclaiming, '*Ah wahi! Ah wahi!*' in accents the most piteous that can be imagined.

'These brought the dervish out, and when he had heard my tale, invited me into the hut, where I found another dervish, of much more commanding aspect than the former. He was clad nearly in the same manner that I am now, (indeed, the cap I wear was his); but there was a wildness about his looks that was quite imposing.

'At the sight of me and my companion, he appeared struck by a sudden thought. He and the other dervish having talked together in private, he proposed that I should accompany him to Ispahan, promised that he would be kind to me, and, if I behaved well, would put me into the way of making my fortune. I readily agreed, and after the dervish of the hut had given us a pipe to smoke, we departed, walking at a good pace, without much being said between us during some time. *Dervish Bideen*, for that was his name, at length began to question me very closely about my former life, and hearing in what my accomplishments consisted, seemed to be well pleased. He then descanted upon the advantages attending the life of a dervish, proved them to be superior to the low pursuits of a *luti*, and at length persuaded me to embrace his profession. He said, that if I would look upon him as my master, he would teach me all he knew, and *that*, he assured me, was no small portion of knowledge, inasmuch as he was

esteemed the most perfect dervish in Persia. He began to talk of magic and astrology, and gave me various receipts for making spells and charms, to serve on every occasion in life; by the sale of which alone I should be able to make my fortune. The tail of a hare, placed under the pillow of a child, he assured me, produces sleep; and its blood, given to a horse, makes him fleet and long-winded. The eye and the knuckle bones of a wolf, attached to a boy's person, give him courage; and its fat, rubbed on a woman, will convert her husband's love into indifference: its gall, used in the same manner, produces fruitfulness. But the article which bore the greatest price in the seraglios was the *kûs keftar*, the dried skin of a female hyena; which, if worn about the person, conciliated the affection of all to the wearer. He discoursed long upon these and such like subjects, until he gradually excited so much interest in my heart, by thus placing my fortune apparently in full view, that at length he ventured to make a

proposal, which he easily judged would be disagreeable.

"'Sefer,' said he to me, 'you know not the treasure you possess in that ape,—I do not mean as he stands now alive, but dead. If he were dead, I could extract such ingredients from him to make charms, which would sell for their weight in gold in the harem of the Shah. You must know, that the liver of an ape, and only of that particular species which you possess, is sure to bring back the love of a desired object to the person who may possess it. Then the skin of its nose, if worn round the neck, is a decisive preventive against poison; and the ashes of the animal itself, after it has been burnt over a slow fire, will, if taken internally, give all the qualities of the ape, cunning, adroitness, and the powers of imitation.' He then proposed that we should kill the beast.

'I was certainly alarmed at the proposal. I had been brought up with my ape; we had hitherto gone through life together in

prosperity as well as in adversity; and to lose him in this barbarous manner was more than I could bear. I was about to give a flat refusal to the dervish, when I observed that his countenance, which hitherto had been all smiles and good humour, had changed to downright furiousness; and fearing that he would take by force that which I could not protect, I, with all the reluctance imaginable, consented to the execution of his project. We then deviated from the road; and having got into a solitary glen, we gathered together some dry stubble and underwood, made a fire, striking a light with a flint and steel, which my companion carried about him. He took my poor ape into his hands, and, without farther ceremony, put it to death. He then dissected it; and having taken from it the liver, and the skin off its nose, burnt it in the pile we had made; and when all was over, carefully collected the ashes, which having packed in a corner of his handkerchief, we proceeded on our journey.

'We reached Ispahan in due time, where I exchanged such parts of my dress as belonged to the luti for the garb of a dervish, and then we proceeded to Tehran. Here my master's appearance produced great effect; for no sooner was it known that he was arrived, than all sorts of people flocked to consult him.—Mothers wanted protection for their children against the evil eye; wives a spell against the jealousy of their husbands; warriors talismans to secure them from harm in battle. But the ladies of the king's seraglio were his principal customers. Their most urgent demand was some powerful charm to ensure the attention of the king. The collection of materials for this purpose, which the Dervish Bideen had made, was very great. He had the hairs of a lynx, the back bone of an owl, and bear's grease in various preparations. To one of the ladies, who, owing to her advanced age, was more pressing than the others, he sold the liver of my monkey, assuring her, that as soon as she appeared, wearing it about

her person, his majesty would distinguish her from her rivals. To another, who complained that she was never in favour, and frustrated in all her schemes to attract notice, he administered a decoction of the monkey's ashes; and to a third, who wanted a charm to drive away wrinkles, he gave an ointment, which, if properly applied, and provided she did not laugh, or otherwise move the muscles of her face, would effectually keep them smooth.

'I was initiated into all these mysteries, and frequently was a party concerned in a fraud, whenever my master was put to the necessity of doing something supernatural to support his credit, if by chance his spells were palpably of no avail. But whatever profit arose either from these services, or from the spoils of my monkey, he alone was the gainer, for I never touched a *ghauz** of it.

'I accompanied the Dervish Bideen into

* A *ghauz* is a small copper coin.

various countries, where we practised our art: sometimes we were adored as saints, and at others stoned for vagrants. Our journeys being performed on foot, I had good opportunities to see every place in detail. We travelled from Tehran to Constantinople, and from that capital to Grand Cairo, through Aleppo and Damascus. From Cairo we showed ourselves at Mecca and Medina; and taking ship at Jedda, landed at Surat, in the Guzerat, whence we walked to Lahore and Cashmire.

'At this last place, the dervish, according to custom, endeavoured to deceive the natives; but they were too enlightened for us, and we were obliged to steal away in disgrace; and we at length fixed ourselves at Herat, where we were repaid for our former want of success by the credulity of the Affghans, who were good enough to admit all that we chose to tell them. But here, as the dervish was getting up a plan to appear as a prophet, and when our machinery for performing miracles was nearly completed,

he, who had promised eternal youth to thousands, at length paid the debt of nature himself. He had shut himself up in a small hut, situated at the top of a mountain near Herat, where we made the good people believe he was living upon no other food than that which the *Gins* and *Peris* brought to him; but unfortunately he actually died of a surfeit, having eat more of a roast lamb and sweetmeats than his nature could support. For my own credit, I was obliged to say, that the Gins, jealous of us mortals for possessing the society of so wonderful a person, had so inflated him with celestial food, that, leaving no room for his soul, it had been completely blown out of his body, and carried away into the fifth heaven by a strong north-east wind, which was blowing at the time. This wind, which lasts for 120 days during the summer months, and without which the inhabitants would almost die with heat, I endeavoured to make them believe was a miracle performed by the dervish in their favour, as a parting legacy to

them and their descendants for ever. The old men, indeed, who recollected the wind ever since their youth, were incredulous; but their testimony bore but little weight, compared to the influence which we had acquired. He was buried with the greatest honours; and the prince of Herat himself, *Eshek Mirza*, lent his shoulder to bear his coffin to the grave. A mausoleum was erected over it by some of the most pious of the Affghans, and it has even since been a place of pilgrimage from all the country round.

'I remained at Herat for some time after the death of my companion, in order to enjoy the advantages which might accrue to me from being the friend and disciple of one of such high reputation, and I did not repent of my resolution. I disposed of my spells at great prices, and moreover made a considerable sum by selling the combings of my deceased friend's beard, and the cuttings of his nails, which I assured my purchasers had been carefully preserved during the

time of his retirement in the mountains; although in fact they were chiefly collected from my own person. When I had sold of these relics enough to make several respectable beards, and a proportionate quantity of nails, I felt that if I persisted in the traffic, notwithstanding the inordinate credulity of the Affghans, I might be discovered for a cheat, therefore I took my departure, and, having travelled into various parts of Persia, I at length fixed myself among the Hezareh, a large tribe, living for the most part in tents, and which occupy the open country between Caboul and Candahar. My success among them was something quite beyond my expectation, for I put into practice what the Dervish Bideen had planned at Herat, and actually appeared in the character of a prophet.'

The Dervish Sefer then, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the dervish who sat next to him, said, 'My friend, here, was my accomplice on that occasion, and he will remember how ingeniously we managed to

make the Hezareh believe that we possessed a caldron which was always full of boiled rice—a miracle which even the most incredulous did not fail to believe, as long as they got their share of it. In short, I am the celebrated *Hazret Ishan* himself; he of whom you have lately heard so much in Khorassan; and although my sacred character was not proof against the attacks made upon it by the arms of the Shah, yet, while it lasted, I collected enough from the zeal and credulity of my disciples to enable me to pass the remainder of my life in comfort. I have lived at Meshed for some time; and it is but a week ago that we contrived to perform the miracle of giving sight to a blind girl; so now are held in the highest veneration.'

Here the Dervish Sefer ended his history, and then called upon his next neighbour to give an account of himself.

This was the dervish who had been his accomplice among the Hezareh, and he began as follows:

'My father was a celebrated man of the law, of the city of Kom, enjoying the reputation of saying his prayers, making his ablutions, and keeping his fasts more regularly than any man in Persia; in short, he was the cream of Shîahs, and the model of Mussulmans. He had many sons, and we were brought up in the strictest practice of the external parts of our religion. The rigour and severity with which we were treated were combated on our part by cunning and dissimulation. These qualities gradually fixed themselves in our character; and without any consideration for our circumstances, we were early branded as a nest of hypocrites, and as the greatest cheats and liars of our birth-place. I, in particular, was so notorious, that in my own defence I became a dervish, and I owe the reputation which I have acquired in that calling to the following fortunate circumstance.

'I had scarcely arrived at Tehran, and had taken up my quarters opposite to a druggist's shop, when I was called up in a

great hurry by an old woman, who informed me that her master, the druggist, had just been taken exceedingly ill, after having eat more than usual; that the medicine which he had taken had not performed its office; and that his family wished to try what a talisman would do for him: she therefore invited me to write one suited to his case. As I had neither paper, pens, nor ink, I insisted upon going into his *anderûn*, or woman's apartments, and writing it there, to which she consented. I was introduced into a small square yard, and then into a room, where I found the sick man extended on his bed on the ground, surrounded by as many women as the place could hold, who cried aloud, and exclaimed, '*wahi, wahi*, in the name of God he dies, he dies!' The implements of medicine were spread about, which showed that every thing had been done either to kill or save him. A large basin, which had contained the prescription, was seen on the shelf; the long glass tube, that instrument of torture, was

in a corner; and among other furniture, the doctor himself was seen seated, unconcernedly enjoying his pipe, and who, having found that human means were inefficient, had had recourse to supernatural, and had prescribed, as a last resource, the talisman, which it was my fate to write. A new dervish excited new hopes, for I saw that I produced much stir as I entered the sick room. I asked for paper with an air of authority, as if I felt great confidence in my own powers, (although, in fact, I had never written a talisman before), and a large piece was produced, which seemed to have been the wrapper to some drug or other. Pen and ink were also given me; and then calling up all my gravity, I scrawled the paper over in a variety of odd characters, which here and there contained the names of Allah, Mohamed, Ali, Hassan, and Hossein, and all the Imâms, placing them in different anagrams, and substituting here and there figures instead of letters. I then handed it over with great ceremony to the doctor, who

calling for water and a basin, washed the whole from off the paper into the basin, whilst the bystanders offered up prayers for the efficacy of the precious writing. The doctor then said, 'In the name of the prophet, let the patient take this; and if fate hath decreed that he is to live, then the sacred names which he will now swallow will restore him: but if not, neither my skill, nor that of any other man, can ever be of the least avail.'

'The draught was administered, and every eye was immediately fixed upon the wretched man's face, as if a resuscitation was expected to ensue. He remained for some time without showing any symptom of life; when, to the astonishment of all, not excepting myself and the doctor, he groaned, opened his eyes, raised his head on his arm, then called for a basin, and at length vomited in a manner that would have done credit to the prescription of Abu Avicenna himself. In short, he recovered.

In my own mind, I immediately attri-

buted the happy change to the drug which had once been wrapped in the paper, and which with the nausea of the ink, had produced the effect just described; but I took care to let the bystanders know that the cure was entirely owing to the interference, and to the hand writing of one of my sanctity; and that but for me he would have died.

'The doctor, on the other hand, took all the merit of the case to himself; for as soon as his patient had opened his eyes, he exclaimed, 'Did I not tell you so?' and in proportion as the draught operated, he went on exulting thus: 'There, there, see the efficacy of my prescription! Had it not been for me, you would have seen the druggist dead before you.'

'I, however, would not allow him to proceed, and said: 'If you are a doctor, why did you not cure your patient without calling for me? Keep to your blisters and to your bleedings, and do not interfere with that which doth not belong to you.'

'He answered, 'Mr. Dervish, I make no

doubt that you can write a very good talisman, and also can get a very good price for it; but every one knows who and what dervishes are; and if their talismans are ever of use, it is not their sanctity which makes them so.'

"'Whose dog are you,' exclaimed I, in return, 'to talk to me after this manner? I, who am a servant of the prophet. As for you doctors, your ignorance is proverbial: you hide it by laying all to fate: if by chance your patient recovers, then you take all the credit of the cure to yourselves; should he die, you say, God hath decreed thus; what can the efforts of man avail? Go to, go to; when you have nearly killed your next patient, and then know not what more to ordain, send for me again, and I will cover your impudent ignorance by curing him as I have just done the druggist.'

"'By my head, and by your death,' returned the doctor, 'I am not a man to hear this from any one, much less from a dog of a dervish:' and immediately he got up, and

approached me in a threatening attitude, making use of every epithet of abuse that he could think of.

'I received him with suitable expressions of contempt, and we very soon came to blows: he so effectually fastened upon my hair, and I upon his beard, that we plucked out whole handfuls from each other: we bit and spat, and fought with such fury, heedless of the sick man and the cries of the women, that the uproar became very great, and perhaps would have terminated in something serious, if one of the women had not run in to us, in great agitation, assuring us that the *Darogah*'s officers (police men) were then knocking at the door of the house, and inquiring whence proceeded all the disturbance.

'This parted us; and then I was happy to find that the bystanders were in my favour, for they expressed their contempt of the skill of the physician, whose only object was to obtain money without doing his patients any good, whilst they looked upon

me in the light of a divine person, who in my hand-writing alone possessed the power of curing all manner of disease.

'The doctor, seeing how ill matters were going for him, stole away with the best face he could; but before he left the room, he stooped down, and collecting as many of the hairs of his beard, which I had plucked from him, as he could find, to which he cunningly added some of my own hair, he brandished them in my face, saying, 'We shall see on whose side the laugh will be when you are brought before the Cadi to-morrow; for beards are worth a ducat * per hair in Tehran, and I doubt, with all your talismans, whether you can buy these that I hold in my hand.'

'It was evident, that when his anger was cooled, out of regard to his own reputation, he would not put his threat into execution; so the fear of being dragged be-

* A beard is held so sacred in the East, that every hair which grows upon a Mohamedan's chin is protected from molestation by a heavy fine.

fore the justice gave me no uneasiness, and I therefore only considered how to make the most of the fortunate circumstance which had just taken place. The report that the druggist (who was the first in Tehran) had been brought to life, when on the point of death, by a newly arrived dervish, was soon spread about, and I became the object of general concern. From morning to night I was taken up in writing talismans, for which I made my customers pay according to their means, and in a short time I found myself the possessor of some hundreds of piastres. But unfortunately for me, I did not meet with a dying druggist and a piece of his paper every day; and feeling myself reduced to live upon the reputation of this one miracle, which I perceived to my sorrow daily diminished, I made a virtue of necessity, and determining to make the tour of Persia, I immediately left Tehran. To whichsoever city I bent my steps, I managed matters so adroitly, that I made my reputation precede my arrival there. The drug-

gist had given me an attestation, under his seal, that he had been restored to life by virtue of a talisman written by my hand, and this I exhibited wherever I went, to corroborate the truth of the reports which had been circulated in my favour. I am now living upon this reputation: it supports me very tolerably for the present, but whenever I find that it begins to fail, I shall proceed elsewhere.'—The dervish here ended his history.

When the third dervish came to his turn to speak, he said: 'My tale is but short, although story-telling is my profession. I am the son of a schoolmaster, who, perceiving that I was endowed with a very retentive memory, made me read and repeat to him most of the histories with which our language abounds; and when he found that he had furnished my mind with a sufficient assortment, he turned me out into the world under the garb of dervish, to relate them in public to such audiences as my talents might gather round me.

'My first essays were any thing but successful. My auditors heard my stories, and then walked away without leaving me any reward for my pains. Little by little I acquired experience. Instead of being carried away, as I had at first permitted myself to be, by the interest of the story, I made a pause when the catastrophe drew near, and then, looking around me, said, 'All ye that are present, if you will be liberal towards me, I will tell you what follows;' and I seldom failed in collecting a good handful of copper coin. For instance, in the story of the Prince of Khatai and the Princess of Samarcand, when the Ogree *Hezar Mun* seizes the prince, and is about to devour him; when he is suspended in the ogre's mouth, between his upper and lower jaw; when the princess, all dishevelled and forlorn, is on her knees praying that he may be spared; when the attendants couch their lances, and are in dismay; when the horses start back in fright; when the thunder rolls, and the ogre growls; then I

stop, and say, 'Now, my noble hearers, open your purses, and you shall hear in how miraculous a manner the Prince of Khatai cut the ogre's head off!' By such arts, I manage to extract a subsistence from the curiosity of men; and when my stock of stories is exhausted in one place, I leave it, travel to another, and there renew my labours.'

CHAPTER XII.

Hajji Baba finds that fraud does not remain unpunished, even in this world.—He makes fresh plans.

The dervishes having finished their narratives, I thanked them for the entertainment and instruction which they had afforded me, and I forthwith resolved to learn as much from them as possible, in order to become a dervish myself, in case I should be obliged to abandon my present business. Dervish Sefer instructed me in the numerous tricks which he practised, to impose himself upon the world as a person of great sanctity; I learned the art of writing talismans from the second; and the story-teller taught me some of the tales with which his head was stored, lent me his books, and gave me general rules how to lead on the

curiosity of an audience, until their money should insensibly be enticed from their pockets.

In the mean while, I continued to sell my tobacco and my pipes; but owing to my intimacy with the dervishes, who smoked away all my profits, I was obliged to adulterate the tobacco of my other customers considerably more than usual; so that in fact they enjoyed little else than the fumes of dung, straw, and decayed leaves.

One evening, when it was dusk, and about the time of closing the bazars, an old woman in rags, apparently bent double with age, stopped me, and requested me to dress a pipe for her to smoke. She was closely veiled, and scarcely uttered a word beyond her want. I filled her one of my very worst mixture: she put it to her mouth; and at her spitting, coughing, and exclamations, half a dozen stout fellows, with long twigs in their hands, immediately came up, seized me, and threw me on my back. The supposed old woman then cast

off her veil, and I beheld the *Mohtesib** in person.

'At length, wretch of an *Ispahani!*' said he, 'I have caught you—you, that have so long been poisoning the people of Meshed with your abominable mixtures. You shall receive as many strokes on your feet as you have received *shahies*† for your pipes.' 'Bring the *felek*‡, said he, to his officers, 'and lay on till his nails drop off.'

My feet were instantly inserted into the dreaded noose, and the blows fell upon them so thick, that I soon saw the images of ten thousand Mohtesibs, intermixed with ten thousand old women, dancing before

* The *Mohtesib* is an officer who perambulates the city, and examines weights and measures, and qualities of provisions.

† Twenty *shahies* make the *groust* or piastre, which is worth about two shillings British.

‡ The *felek* is a long pole, with a noose in the middle, through which the feet of him who is to be bastinadoed are passed, whilst its extremities are held up by two men, for the two others, who strike.

my eyes, apparently enjoying my torture, and laughing at my writhing and contortions. I implored the mercy of my tormentor by the souls of his father, mother, and grandfather—by his own head—by that of his child—and by that of his prince; by the Prophet—by Ali—and by all the Imâms. I cursed tobacco. I renounced smoking. I appealed to the feelings of the surrounding spectators, to my friends the three dervishes, who stood there stirring neither limb nor muscle for me; in short, I bawled, cried, entreated, until I entirely lost all sensation and all recollection.

At length, when I came to myself, I found myself seated with my head against the wall on the side of the road, surrounded by a crowd gaping at my miserable situation. No one seemed to pity me. My pipes, my jug, and every thing that I possessed, had been taken from me, and I was left to crawl to my home as well as I was able. Luckily it was not far off, and I

reached it on my hands and knees, making the most piteous moans imaginable.

After I had remained a day in horrid torment, with my feet swelled into a mis-shapen mass of flesh and gore, I received a visit from one of the dervishes, who ventured to approach me, fearful, as he told me, of being taken up as my accomplice, in case he had come sooner to my help. He had, in his early career, undergone a similar beating himself, and, therefore, knew what remedies to apply to my limbs, which, in a short time, restored them to their former state.

During my confinement, I had time to reflect upon my situation. I determined to leave Meshed, for I felt that I had entered it at an unlucky hour. Once my back had been sprained, and once I had been bastinadoed. I had managed to collect a small sum of money, which I kept carefully buried in a corner near my room; and with this I intended to make my way to Tehran by the

very first caravan that should be on its departure. I communicated my plan to the dervishes, who applauded it; and, moreover, the Dervish Sefer offered to accompany me; 'for,' said he, 'I have been warned that the priesthood of Meshed are jealous of my increasing influence, and that they are laying a plot for my ruin; and, as it is impossible to withstand their power, I will try my fortunes elsewhere.'

It was agreed that I should put on the dress of a dervish; and having made my purchases, in the bazar, of a cap, some beads, and a goat's skin, which I slung across my shoulder, I was ready to begin my journey at a moment's warning.

We became so impatient to depart, that we had almost made up our minds to set off without any other companions, and trust to our good fortune to find our road, and escape the dangers of it; but we determined to take a *fall** out of Saadi, before we came

* *Saadi*, *Hafiz*, and the *Koran*, are the three books to which the Persians most willingly refer

to a resolution. Dervish Sefer, after making the usual prayer, opened the book, and read: 'It is contrary to reason, and to the advice of the wise, to take medicine without confidence, or to travel an unknown road without accompanying the caravan.' This extraordinary warning settled our minds, and we determined to be guided by it.

On making inquiries about the departure of caravans for Tehran, I was delighted to meet my friend Ali Kâtir, the muleteer, who had just arrived at Meshed, and was then making a bargain with a merchant, to convey merchandize, consisting of the lambs' skins of Bokhara, to the capital. As soon as he saw me, he uttered an exclamation of delight, and immediately lighted his *nargil*, or water pipe, which he invited me to smoke with him. I related all my adventures since we last parted, and he gave me an account of his. Having left Meshed with a caravan

for this mode of divination. Its resemblance to that of the *Sortes Virgilianæ* must occur to every reader.

for Ispahan, with his mules loaded partly with bars of silver, and partly with lambs' skins; and having undergone great fears on account of the Turcomans—he reached his destination in safety. That city was still agitated with the recollections of the late attack of the caravanserai, of which I have given an account; and the general belief was, that the invaders had made their approach in a body, consisting of more than a thousand men; that they had been received with great bravery, and that one Kerbelai Hassan, a barber, had, with his own hand, wounded one of the chiefs so severely, that he had escaped with the greatest difficulty.

I had always kept this part of my adventures secret from every body; so I hid any emotion that might appear on my face from the muleteer, by puffing out a sufficient volume of smoke in his face.

From Ispahan he carried cotton stuffs, tobacco, and copper ware to Yezd, where he remained some time, until a caravan was

collected for Meshed, when he loaded his mules with the manufactures of the former city. Ali Kâtir agreed that Dervish Sefer and I should return with him to Tehran, and that whenever we were tired with walking, he would willingly assist us, by permitting us to mount his mules.

CHAPTER XIII.

Hajji Baba leaves Meshed, is cured of his sprain, and relates a story.

When I had cleared the gate which leads out of Meshed to Tehran, I shook the collar of my coat, and exclaimed to myself: 'May Heaven send thee misfortunes!' for had I been heard by any one of the pilgrims, who were now on their return—it very probably would have gone ill with me. My companion, Dervish Sefer, whom I knew to be of my mind, entered into my feelings, and we both vented our spleen against the inhabitants of that place; I for the drubbings which had been inflicted upon me, he for the persecutions he had undergone from the Mollahs.

'As for you, my friend,' said he to me, 'you are young; you have much to suffer

before you gain the experience necessary to carry you through life: do not repine at the first beating; it will probably save you many more, and will teach you another time to discover a *Mohtesib*, although hid under a woman's veil: but (taking hold of his beard) for a man of my age, one who has seen so much of the world, to be obliged to set out upon his travels again, is truly a great misfortune.'

'But it would have been easy for you,' said I, 'to remain at Meshed, if you had chosen it: had you been regular in your prayers and ablutions, you might have bid defiance to the Mollahs.'

'That is true enough,' said the Dervish; 'but the fact is, that the festival of the Ramazan is now close at hand, when I should have been more closely watched than ever by them; and as I cannot and will not fast (smoking being as necessary to me as air, and wine as daily bread), I have thought it better to make a journey during that time, for the sake of the indulgence

which is permitted to travellers. I might perhaps have deceived them, as I have frequently done before, by eating and smoking in secret; but one so notorious as I, who lives by the supposed sanctity of his character, being narrowly watched, cannot take such liberties.'

We arrived at Semnan without the occurrence of any thing remarkable, excepting, that a day or two before we reached it, when I was helping my friend Ali Kâtir to load one of his mules, I sprained my back again in its old place: the pain was so great, that it became impossible for me to proceed with the caravan, and I determined to remain where I was until I was cured; particularly, as all danger from the Turcomans having passed, it was needless to make myself any longer a dependent upon a caravan. Dervish Sefer, who was anxious to get to the wine and pleasures of the capital, continued his journey.

I took up my abode in a tomb on the skirts of the town; and having spread my

goat's skin in a corner of it, I proclaimed my arrival, according to the custom adopted by travelling dervishes, blowing my horn, and making my exclamations of *Hak*, *Hú*, *Allah Akbar*, in a most sonorous and audible manner. I had allowed my person to acquire a wild and extravagant appearance, and flattered myself that I did credit to the instructions which had been given me in the arts of deception.

I was visited by several women, for whom I wrote talismans, and they repaid me by small presents of fruit, milk, honey, and other trifles. My back became so painful, that I was obliged to inquire if no one at Semnan could afford me relief. The barber and the farrier were the only two supposed to possess any medical talents; the one skilled in bleeding, drawing teeth, and setting a limb; the other, from his knowledge in the diseases of horses, being often consulted in human ailments. There was also a *gís sefid*, or gray wig, an old woman of a hag-like and decrepit appearance, who was

looked up to as an oracle in all cases where the knowledge of the barber and farrier was of no avail, and who had besides a great many nostrums and recipes for all sorts of aches. Each came to me in succession: all were agreed that my disorder proceeded from cold; and as fire was the hottest thing in opposition to cold that they knew of, they as unanimously agreed that the actual cautery should immediately be applied to the part; and the farrier, on account of his dealings in hot and cold iron, was appointed operator. He accordingly brought a pan of charcoal, a pair of bellows, and some small skewers; and seating himself in a corner, made his fire, and heated his skewers: when they were red hot, I was placed on the ground flat on my face, and then, with great solemnity, my back was seared with the burning iron, whilst all the by-standers, at every touch, exclaimed, with great earnestness, '*Khoda shefa midehed*,' God gives relief. My medical attendants, in their united wisdom, out of compliment to the

prophet and the twelve Imâms, marked me in thirteen different places; and although, when I had endured half the operation, I began to cry out most lustily with the pain, still I was not let off until the whole was gone through. It was long before the wounds which they had inflicted were cured; and as they never would heal unless I was kept in perfect quiet, I confined myself to my cell for a considerable time; at the end of which, my sprain had entirely taken its leave, and strength was restored to my whole frame. Of course, my recovery was attributed to the thirteen worthies, who had presided over the operation, and all the town became more than ever persuaded of the efficacy of hot iron; but I could not but think that long repose had been my best doctor—an opinion which I took care to keep to myself; for I had no objection that the world should believe that I was a protegé of so many holy personages.

I now determined to pursue my journey to Tehran; but before I ventured to pro-

duce myself as a dervish upon that stage, I resolved to try my talent in relating a story before a Semnan audience. Accordingly, I went to a small open space, that is situated near the entrance of the bazars, where most of the idlers of the town flock about noon; and making the sort of exclamations usual upon such occasions, I soon collected a crowd, who settled themselves on the ground, round the place which I had fixed upon for my theatre. A short story, touching a barber at Bagdad (which I had heard when I was myself in that profession), luckily came into my memory; and, standing in the middle of a circle of louts with uplifted eyes and open mouths, I made my debut in the following words:

'In the reign of the Caliph Haroun-al Rashid, of happy memory, lived in the city of Bagdad a celebrated barber, of the name of Ali Sakal. He was so famous for a steady hand, and dexterity in his profession, that he could shave a head, and

trim a beard and whiskers, with his eyes blind-folded, without once drawing blood. There was not a man of any fashion at Bagdad who did not employ him; and such a run of business had he, that at length he became proud and insolent, and would scarcely ever touch a head, whose master was not at least a *Beg* or an *Aga*. Wood for fuel was always scarce and dear at Bagdad; and as his shop consumed a great deal, the wood-cutters brought their loads to him in preference, almost sure of meeting with a ready sale. It happened one day, that a poor wood-cutter, new in his profession, and ignorant of the character of Ali Sakal, went to his shop, and offered him for sale a load of wood, which he had just brought from a considerable distance in the country, on his ass: Ali immediately offered him a price, making use of these words, '*for all the wood that was upon the ass.*' The wood-cutter agreed, unloaded his beast, and asked for the money. 'You have not given me all the wood yet,' said

the barber; 'I must have the pack-saddle (which is chiefly made of wood) into the bargain; that was our agreement.' 'How!' said the other, in great amazement—'who ever heard of such a bargain?—it is impossible.' In short, after many words and much altercation, the overbearing barber seized the pack-saddle, wood and all, and sent away the poor peasant in great distress. He immediately ran to the Cadi, and stated his griefs: the Cadi was one of the barber's customers, and refused to hear the case. The wood-cutter applied to a higher judge: he also patronized Ali Sakal, and made light of the complaint. The poor man then appealed to the Mûfti himself; who, having pondered over the question, at length settled, that it was too difficult a case for him to decide, no provision being made for it in the Koran, and therefore he must put up with his loss. The wood-cutter was not disheartened; but forthwith got a scribe to write a petition to the Caliph himself, which he duly presented on Friday, the

day when he went in state to the mosque. The Caliph's punctuality in reading petitions is well known, and it was not long before the wood-cutter was called to his presence. When he had approached the Caliph, he kneeled and kissed the ground, and then placing his arms straight before him, his hands covered with the sleeves of his cloak, and his feet close together, he awaited the decision of his case. 'Friend,' said the Caliph, 'the barber has words on his side—you have equity on yours. The law must be defined by words, and agreements must be made by words: the former must have its course, or it is nothing; and agreements must be kept, or there would be no faith between man and man; therefore the barber must keep all his wood; but——' Then calling the wood-cutter close to him, the Caliph whispered something in his ear, which none but he could hear, and then sent him away quite satisfied.

Here then I made a pause in my narrative, and said (whilst I extended a small tin

cup which I held in my hand), 'Now, my noble audience, if you will give me something, I will tell you what the Caliph said to the wood-cutter.' I had excited great curiosity, and there was scarcely one of my hearers who did not give me a piece of money.

'Well then,' said I, 'the Caliph whispered to the wood-cutter what he was to do, in order to get satisfaction from the barber, and what that was I will now relate. The wood-cutter having made his obeisances, returned to his ass, which was tied without, took it by the halter, and proceeded to his home. A few days after, he applied to the barber, as if nothing had happened between them, requesting that he, and a companion of his from the country, might enjoy the dexterity of his hand; and the price at which both operations were to be performed was settled. When the wood-cutter's crown had been properly shorn, Ali Sakal asked where his companion was. 'He is just standing without here,' said the other, 'and

he shall come in presently.' Accordingly he went out, and returned, leading his ass after him by the halter. 'This is my companion,' said he, 'and you must shave him.' 'Shave him!' exclaimed the barber, in the greatest surprise; 'it is enough that I have consented to demean myself by touching you, and do you insult me by asking me to do as much to your ass? Away with you, or I'll send you both to *Jehanum*;' and forthwith drove them out of his shop.

'The wood-cutter immediately went to the Caliph, was admitted to his presence, and related his case. ''Tis well,' said the commander of the faithful: 'bring Ali Sakal and his razors to me this instant,' he exclaimed to one of his officers; and in the course of ten minutes the barber stood before him. 'Why do you refuse to shave this man's companion?' said the Caliph to the barber: 'was not that your agreement?' Ali, kissing the ground, answered: ''Tis true, O Caliph, that such was our agreement; but who ever made a companion of

an ass before? or who ever before thought of treating it like a true believer?' 'You may say right,' said the Caliph: 'but, at the same time, who ever thought of insisting upon a pack-saddle being included in a load of wood? No, no, it is the wood-cutter's turn now. To the ass immediately, or you know the consequences.' The barber was then obliged to prepare a great quantity of soap, to lather the beast from head to foot, and to shave him in the presence of the Caliph and of the whole court, whilst he was jeered and mocked by the taunts and laughing of all the bystanders. The poor wood-cutter was then dismissed with an appropriate present of money, and all Bagdad resounded with the story, and celebrated the justice of the Commander of the faithful.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the man he meets, and of the consequences of the encounter.

I LEFT Semnan with a light heart—my sprain was cured—I was young and handsome—twenty tomauns, my savings at Meshed, clinked in my purse—I had acquired some experience in the world; and I determined, as soon as I reached Tehran, to quit the garb of a dervish, to dress myself well from head to foot, and to endeavour to push my fortunes in some higher walk in life.

About a day's journey from Tehran, as I was walking onward, chanting, with all my throat, a song on the loves of *Leilah* and *Majnoun*, I was overtaken by a courier, who entered into conversation with me, and invited me to partake of some victuals which

he had brought with him. The heat of the day being overpowering, I willingly accepted his invitation. We settled ourselves on the borders of a rivulet, near a corn-field, whilst the courier took off his horse's bridle, and permitted it to feed on the new wheat. He then groped up, from the deep folds of his riding trowsers, a pocket handkerchief, in which were wrapped several lumps of cold boiled rice, and three or four flaps of bread, which he spread before us, and then added some sour curds, which he poured from a small bag that hung at his saddle-bow. From the same trowsers, which contained his shoes, a provision of tobacco, a drinking cup, and many other useful articles, he drew half a dozen raw onions, which he added to the feast; and we eat with such appetite, that very soon we were reduced to the melancholy dessert of sucking our fingers. We washed the whole down with some water from the rivulet, and only then (such had been our voracity) we thought of questioning each other concerning the object of our

respective journeys. From my dress, he perceived me to be a dervish, and my story was soon told: as for himself, he was a courier belonging to the governor of Asterabad, and, to my joy and surprise, was carrying the happy intelligence of the release of my former companion, Asker Khan, the Shah's poet, from his captivity among the Turcomans. I did not let the courier know how much I was interested in his errand, for experience had taught me how wise it was, in the affairs of life, to keep one's own counsel; and, therefore, I pretended ignorance of even the existence of such a person.

My companion informed me that the poet had managed to reach Asterabad in safety, and that, being destitute of every thing, he, in the meanwhile, had been despatched to give intelligence of his situation to his family. He showed me the letters with which he was entrusted, which he drew forth from his breast, wrapped up in a handkerchief; and being a very inquisitive fellow, though unable to read, he was happy to find

in me one who might give him some account of their contents. The first which I inspected was a memorial from the poet to the King of Kings, in which he set forth, in language the most poetic, all the miseries and tortures which he had endured since he had been thrown into the hands of the Turcomans: that the hunger, the thirst, and the barbarous treatment which he had experienced, were nothing, when compared with the privation of the all-gracious and refulgent presence of that pearl of royalty, that gem of magnificence, the quintessence of all earthly perfection, the great King of Kings! that as the vilest reptile that crawls is permitted to enjoy the warmth of the glorious sun, so he, the meanest of the king's subjects, hoped once more to bask in the sunshine of the royal countenance; and, finally, he humbly prayed, that his long absence might not deprive him of the shadow of the throne; that he might aspire to re-occupy his former post near his majesty's person, and once again be permitted

to vie with the nightingale, and sing of the charms and perfections of his lovely rose.

The next letter was addressed to the prime vizier, in which that notorious minister, decrepit in person, and nefarious in conduct, was called a planet among the stars, and the sheet-anchor of the state, and in which the poet sues for his protection. There was nearly a similar one to his former enemy, the lord high treasurer. I then inspected the letters addressed to his family, of which one was to his wife, another to his son's tutor, and a third to his steward. To his wife, he talked of the interior arrangements of his anderûn; hoped that she had been economical in her dress, that she had kept the female slaves in good order, and desired her immediately to set herself and them about making clothes for him, as he was destitute of every thing.

To the tutor, he enjoined great attention to his son's manners; hoped that he had been taught all the best forms of cant and compliment; that he never omitted to say

his prayers; that he was by this time able to sit a horse, to perform the spear exercise, and to fire a gun on the full gallop.

To his steward, he gave some general instructions concerning the administration of his affairs—enjoined great economy;—that he should daily go and stand before the prime vizier; praise him to the skies; and make all sorts of professions, on his part, to his excellency; that he should keep a good watch upon his women and slaves; that his wife should not go too often to the bath; that when she and her slaves went abroad to take the air, he should accompany them. He hoped that no intriguing old women, particularly Jewesses, had been admitted into his harem; and that the walls, which surrounded the women's apartments, had always been kept in good repair, in order to prevent gadding on the house-top with the neighbours. He ordered that his black slave, Johur, was now no longer to be allowed free access into the anderûn; and if ever seen to be familiar with any of the

female slaves, he and they were to be whipped: finally, he desired the steward to give the courier a handsome reward, for being the bearer of such good news to his family.

I folded up the letters again;—those which had been sealed, I again sealed*, and returned to the courier. He seemed to reckon a great deal upon the reward that he was to get for bringing the first intelligence of the poet's safety, and told me that, fearing some other might get the start of him, he had travelled day and night; and added, that the horse, which he now bestrode, belonged to a peasant, from whom he had taken it forcibly on the road, having left his own, which was knocked up, to be brought on after him.

* A Persian letter is folded up like a lady's thread paper, and fastened in the middle by a slip of adhesive paper, which is moistened with the tongue, and then stamped with the seal of the writer. Thus, letters are frequently opened and reclosed without detection.

After we had conversed a little more, he seemed entirely overpowered by fatigue, and fell into a profound sleep. As he lay extended on the grass, I looked upon him, and I began to reflect how easy it would be to forestall him. I knew the whole of the poet's history;—in fact, I was in some measure identified with it.—I began to think that I had a right to the first relation of it. —Then as to the horse, it was as much mine as his; particularly since the peasant, with his own, must now be close at hand: —so without more ceremony, I unfolded the handkerchief, which still lay in his lap, and taking out the letter to the steward, I mounted the horse: I applied the stirrups* to his sides; I galloped off; and in a very short time had left the sleeper far behind me, and had made considerable progress on the road to the capital.

* The stirrup which is a sort of iron shovel, sharp at the edge, in Persia as well as in Turkey, is used by way of spur.

As I rode along, I considered what was now my best line of conduct, and in what manner I should best introduce myself to the poet's family, so as to make my story good, and secure for myself the reward which had been destined for the courier. I calculated that I should have at least a good day's start of him; for when he awoke, he probably would be obliged to walk some distance before he got another horse, should he not regain his own, which was very doubtful; and appearing on foot as he did, it would be an hundred to one if any body would believe his story, and he, most probably, would now be refused the loan of a beast to carry him on. I resolved, therefore, immediately upon reaching Tehran, to sell the horse, and its accoutrements, for what they would fetch; I would then exchange my dervish's dress for the common dress of the country; and making myself up as one come from off a long journey, present myself at the gate of the poet's house, and there make

the best story I could, which would be a sufficiently easy matter, considering how well I was acquainted with every circumstance relating to him.

CHAPTER XV.

Hajji Baba reaches Tehran, and goes to the poet's house.

I ENTERED Tehran early in the morning by the *Shah Abdul Azîm* gate, just as it was opened, and immediately exhibited my horse for sale at the market, which is daily held there, for that purpose. I had proved it to be a good beast, from the rate at which I had travelled since taking my hasty leave of the courier; but a horse-dealer, to whom I showed it, made out so clearly that it was full of defects, that I thought myself in luck, if I got any thing at all for it. It was *chup**—it had the

* The Persians have a particular aversion to horses which have white legs on one side, which

ableh—it was old, and its teeth had been burnt;—in short, it seemed to have every quality that a horse ought not to have. I was therefore surprised when he offered me five tomauns for it, provided I threw him the bridle and saddle into the bargain; and he seemed as surprised when I took him at his word, and accepted of his offer. He paid me down one half of the money, and then offered me a half-starved ass in payment of the remainder; but this I refused, and he promised to pay me in full when we met again. I was too much in haste to continue bargaining any longer; so going straightway to the bazar, I bought a black cap, laid by my dervish's tiara, and having equipped myself in a manner to be taken for one come from off a journey, I inquired my way to the house of the poet.

It was situated in a pleasant quarter of

they call *chup;* and they also very much undervalue a horse that has the *ableh*, which consists of white leprous marks on its nose, round the eyes, and under the tail.

the town, surrounded by gardens filled with poplars and pomegranate trees, and in a street through which ran a stream of water, bordered by beautiful *chenars* *. But the house itself seemed indeed to speak the absence of its master: the gate was half closed; there was no stir about it; and when I entered the first court, I could perceive but few indications of an inhabitant. This looked ill for my promised reward. At length, making my way to the upper room, that was situated over the gate, I there saw a man of about fifty years old, seated on a felt carpet, smoking his *Kaliân*, whom I found to be the very person I was in search of, viz. the *Nazir* or steward.

I immediately exclaimed, 'Good news! the khan is coming.'

'*Yani cheh?* what do you mean?' said he; 'which khan? where? when?'

When I had explained myself, and had presented the letter addressed to him, he

* The *chenar* tree is a species of Sycamore.

seemed to be thrown into a mixed state of feigned joy and real sorrow, amazement, and apprehension.

'But are you very sure,' said he, 'that the khan is alive?'

'Very sure,' returned I; 'and before to-morrow is over, you will receive another courier, who will give you many more particulars of his safety, and who will bring letters to the king, viziers, and others.'

He then began to make all sorts of incoherent exclamations; 'This is a wonderful business! What dust has fallen upon our heads!—Where shall I go?—What shall I do?'

When he had a little recovered himself, I endeavoured to persuade him to give me an explanation of his emotions on this occasion, and tell me why he felt so agitated, and apparently distressed, at what ought only to be a matter of joy. All I could hear from him was, 'He must be dead; every body says he is dead; his wife dreamt that she had lost her largest tooth, the one that

gave her such aching pain, and therefore he is dead; besides the king has settled it so. He cannot be alive; he must not be alive.'

'Well,' said I, 'if he is dead, be it so; all I can say is, that he was one of the true believers at Asterabad, not six days ago; and that he will soon prove in person, by showing himself at Tehran, in the course of another week.'

After the Nazir had sat, and wondered, and ruminated for some time, he said, 'You will not be surprised at my perplexity when I tell you of the state of things here, in consequence of the report of my master's death. In the first place, the Shah has seized all his property: his house, furniture, and live-stock, including his Georgian slaves, are to be given to Khur Ali Mirza, one of the king's younger sons: his village now belongs to the prime vizier: his place is about to be bestowed upon Mirza Fûzûl; and, to crown all, his wife has married his son's tutor. Say, then, whether or no I have not a right to be astonished and perplexed?'

I agreed that there was no disputing his right; 'but, in the mean while,' said I, 'what becomes of my reward?'

'O, as for that,' answered the Nazir, 'you cannot expect any thing from me; for you have brought me no joyful tidings: you may claim it from my master, when he comes, if you choose, but I can give you nothing.'

Upon which, promising to return on some future day, I left the Nazir to his own reflections, and quitted the house.

CHAPTER XVI.

He makes plans for the future, and is involved in a quarrel.

I DETERMINED to wait the arrival of the poet, and through his interference to endeavour to get into some situation, where I might gain my bread honestly, and acquire a chance of advancing myself in life, without having recourse to the tricks and frauds which I had hitherto practised: for I was tired of herding with the low and the vulgar; and I saw so many instances before me of men rising in the world, and acquiring both riches and honour, who had sprung from an origin quite as obscure as my own, that I already anticipated my elevation, and even settled in my own mind how I should act when I was a prime vizier.

'Who,' said I to myself, 'was the Shah's

chief favourite, Ismael Beg *tellai*, or the golden, but a *ferash*, or a tent pitcher? He is neither handsomer nor better spoken than I; and if ever there should be an opportunity of comparing our horsemanship, I think one who has been brought up amongst the Turcomans would show him what riding is, in spite of his reputation. Well; and the famous lord high treasurer, who fills the king's coffers with gold, and who does not forget his own—who and what was he? A barber's son is quite as good as a green-grocer's, and, in our respective cases, a great deal better too; for I can read and write, whereas his excellency, as report says, can do neither. He eats and drinks what he likes; he puts on a new coat every day; and after the Shah, has the choice of all the beauties of Persia; and all this without half my sense, or half my abilities: for to hear the world talk, one must believe him to be little better than a *khúr be teshdeed*, i. e. a doubly accented ass.

I continued wrapt up in these sort of

meditations, seated with my back against the wall of one of the crowded avenues which lead to the gate of the royal palace, and had so worked up my imagination by the prospect of my future greatness, that on rising to walk away, I instinctively pushed the crowd from before me, as if such respect from them was due to one of my lofty pretensions. Some stared at me, some abused me, and others took me for a madman; and indeed when I came to myself, and looked at my tattered clothes and my beggarly appearance, I could not help smiling at their surprise, and at my folly; and straightway went into the cloth bazar in the determination of fitting myself out in decent apparel, as the first step towards my change of life.

Making my way through the crowd, I was stopped by a violent quarrel between three men, who were abusing each other with more than ordinary violence. I pushed into the circle which surrounded them, and there, to my dismay, discovered the courier,

whom I had deceived, seconded by a peasant, attacking the horse-dealer, whom they had just pulled off the horse, which I had sold him.

'That is my horse,' said the peasant.

'That is my saddle,' said the courier.

'They are mine,' exclaimed the horse-dealer.

I immediately saw the danger in which I stood, and was about to slink away, when I was perceived by the horse-dealer, who seized hold of my girdle, and said, 'This is the man I bought the horse of.' As soon as I was recognised by the courier, immediately the whole brunt of the quarrel, like a thunder-cloud, burst on my head, and I was almost overwhelmed by its violence. Rascal, thief, cheat, were epithets which were dinned into my ears without mercy.

'Where's my horse?" cried one.—'Give me my saddle,' vociferated the other.—'Return me my money,' roared out a third.—'Take him to the cadi,' said the crowd.

In vain I bawled, swore, and bade defiance; in vain I was all smoothness and conciliation: it was impossible for the first ten minutes to gain a hearing: every one recited his griefs. The courier's rage was almost ungovernable; the peasant complained of the injustice which had been done him; and the horse-dealer called me every sort of name, for having robbed him of his money. I first talked to the one, then coaxed the other, and endeavoured to bully the third. To the courier I said, 'Why are you so angry? there is your saddle safe and sound, you can ask no more.' To the peasant I exclaimed, 'You could not say more if your beast had actually been killed; take him and walk away, and return thanks to Allah that it is no worse.' As for the horse-dealer, I inveighed against him with all the bitterness of a man who had been cheated of his property: 'You have a right to talk indeed of having been deceived, when to this moment you know that you have only paid me one half of the cost of

the horse, and that you wanted to fob me off with a dying ass for the other half.'

I offered to return him the money; but this he refused: he insisted upon my paying him the keep of the horse besides: upon which a new quarrel ensued, in which arguments were used on both sides which convinced neither party, and consequently we immediately adjourned to the *daroga* or police magistrate, who, we agreed, should decide the question between us.

We found him at his post, at the cross streets in the bazar, surrounded by his officers, who, with their long sticks, were in readiness to inflict the bastinado on the first offender. I opened the case, and stated all the circumstances of it; insisting very strongly on the evident intention to cheat me, which the horse-dealer had exhibited. The horse-dealer answered me, and showed that as the horse did not belong to him, it being stolen from another, he had no right to pay for its keep.

The question puzzled the daroga so

much, that he declined interfering, and was about ordering us to the tribunal of the cadi, when a decrepit old man, a bystander, said, 'Why do you make so much difficulty about a plain question?—when the horse-dealer shall have paid the Hajjî the remaining half of the price of the horse, then the Hajjî shall pay for the keep of the beast, as long as it was in the horse-dealer's possession.'

Every one cried *Barîk Allah! Barîk Allah!* Praise be to God! and whether right or wrong, they all appeared so struck by the specious justice of the decision, that the daroga dismissed us, and told us to depart in peace.

I did not lose a moment in repaying to the horse-dealer the purchase-money of the horse, and in getting from him a receipt in full: it was only after he had settled with me that he began to ponder over the merits of the decision, and seemed extremely puzzled to discover why, if he was entitled to the horse's keep at all, he was not entitled

to it, whether he had paid me half or the whole of the money? He seemed to think, that he for once had been duped; and very luckily his rage was averted from me to the daroga, who he very freely accused of being a puzzle-headed fool, and one who had no more pretension to law than *he* had to honesty.

CHAPTER XVII.

He puts on new clothes, goes to the bath, and appears in a new character.

I NOW looked upon myself as clear of this unpleasant business, which I had entirely brought on my own head, and congratulated myself that I had got off at so cheap a rate. I again made my way to the cloth bazar, and going to the first shop near the gate of it, I inquired the price of red cloth, of which it was my ambition to make a *barûni*, or cloak; because I thought that it would transfer to me that respect which I always felt for those who wore it. The shopkeeper, upon looking at me from head to foot, said, 'A *barûni* indeed! and for whom do you want it, and who is to pay for it?'

'For myself, to be sure,' answered I.

'And what does such a poor devil as you want with such a coat?' said he: 'Mirzas and Khans only wear them, and I am sure you are no such personage.'

I was about to answer in great wrath, when a *dalal* or broker went by, loaded with all sorts of second-hand clothes, which he was hawking about for sale, and to him I immediately made application, in spite of the reiterated calls of the shopkeeper, who now too late repented of having driven me off in so hasty a manner. We retreated to a corner in the gateway of the adjacent mosque, and there the dalal putting his load down, spread his merchandise before me. I was struck by a fine shot silk vest, trimmed in front with gold lace and gold buttons, of which I asked the price. The dalal extolled its beauty and my taste; swore that it had belonged to one of the king's favourite Georgians, who had only worn it twice, and having made me try it on, walked around and around me, exclaiming all the while '*Mashallah, Mash-*

allah!' Praise be to God! I was so pleased with this, that I must needs have a shawl for my waist to match, and he produced an old Cashmerian shawl full of holes and darns, which he assured me had belonged to one of the ladies in the king's harem, and which, he said, he would let me have at a reasonable price. My vanity made me prefer this commodity to a new *Kermán* shawl, which I might have had for what I was about to pay for the old worn out Cashmere, and adjusting it so as to hide the defects, I wound it about my waist, which only wanted a dagger stuck into it, to make my dress complete. With this the dalal also supplied me, and when I was thus equipped I could not resist expressing my satisfaction to the broker, who was not backward in assuring me, that there was not a handsomer nor better drest man in Tehran.

When we came to settle our accounts, the business wore a more serious aspect. The dalal began by assuring me of his honesty, that he was not like other dalals,

who asked an hundred and then took fifty, and that when he said a thing, I might depend upon its veracity. He then asked me five tomauns for the coat, fifteen for the shawl, and four for the dagger, making altogether twenty-four tomauns.

Upon hearing this, my delight subsided, for I had barely twenty tomauns in my pocket, and I was about stripping myself of my finery, and returning again to my old clothes, when the dalal stopped me, and said, 'You may perhaps think that price a little too much, but, by my head and by your soul, I bought them for that—tell me what you will give?' I answered, that it was out of the question dealing with him upon such high terms, but that if he would give them to me for five tomauns I would be a purchaser. This he rejected with disdain, upon which I stripped, and returned him his property. When he had collected his things again, and apparently when all dealings between us were at an end, he said, 'I feel a friendship for

you, and I will do for you, what I would not do for my brother—you shall have them for ten tomauns.' I again refused, and we stood higgling, until we agreed that I should pay him six, and one by way of a dress for himself. This was no sooner said than done.

He then left me, and I packed up my bargain, with the intention of first going to the bath, and there equipping myself. On my road, I bought a pair of high-heeled green slippers, a blue silk shirt, and a pair of crimson silk trowsers, and having tied up the whole in my handkerchief, I proceeded to the bath.

No one took notice of me as I entered, for one of my mean appearance could create no sensation, and I comforted myself by the reflection, that the case would be changed as soon as I should put on my new clothes. I deposited my bundle in a corner, where I also undressed, and having wrapt myself round with a towel, I entered the bath.

Here all ranks were on a level, in appearance at least, and I now flattered myself that my fine form, my broad chest, and narrow waist, would make me an object of admiration. I called to one of the *dalâks* (bathing men), to wait upon me, and to go through the different operations of rubbing with the hand, and of the friction with the hair bag, and I also ordered him to shave my head, to get ready the necessary materials for dying my beard, mustaches, and curls, as well as my hands and the soles of my feet, and also to prepare the depilatory; in short, I announced my intention of undergoing a complete lustration.

The dalâk, as soon as he began rubbing me, expressed his admiration at my broad chest by his repeated exclamations; and bearing in mind the influence which new clothes were likely to create, I behaved like one who had been accustomed to this sort of praise and attention. He said that I could not have come at a luckier hour, for that he had just operated upon a Khan,

who having received a dress of honour from the Shah, upon the occasion of bringing the first melons from Ispahan, had been sent to the bath by the astrologers at this particular time, as the most fortunate for putting on a new dress.

As soon as all was over, the dalâk brought me some dry linen, and conducted me to the spot where I had left my clothes. With what pleasure I opened my bundle and inspected my finery! It appeared that I was renovated in proportion as I put on each article of dress. I had never yet been clothed in silk. I tied on my trowsers with the air of a man of fashion, and when I heard the rustling of my vest, I turned about in exultation to see who might be looking at me. My shawl was wound about me in the newest style, rather falling in front, and spread out large behind, and when the dagger glittered in my girdle, I conceived that nothing could exceed the finish of my whole adjustment. I indented the top of my cap in the true *Kajari* or

royal style, and placed it on my head considerably on one side. When the bathing man at length brought me the looking-glass, as a signal for paying the bath, I detained him for the purpose of surveying myself, arranging my curls to twist up behind the ear, and pulling my mustaches up towards my eyes. I then paid him handsomely, and leaving my old clothes under his charge, I made my exit with the strut of a man of consequence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The poet returns from captivity. The consequences of it for Hajjî Baba.

I took my road towards the poet's house, in the hope of gaining some intelligence about him. From the head of the street, I perceived a crowd surrounding the gate, and I was soon informed that he had just arrived, and had gone through the ceremony of making his entrance over the roof instead of through the door; for such is the custom when a man who has been thought dead returns home alive.

I immediately pushed through the crowd, made my way into the room where the poet was seated, and with every demonstration of great joy, congratulated him upon his safe arrival. He did not recog-

nise me, and even when I had explained who I was, he could scarcely believe that one so trim and smart as I then was could be the same dirty ragged ruffian whom he had known before.

The apartment was filled with all sorts of people, some happy at his return, others full of disappointment. Among the latter, and those who paid him the finest compliments, was Mirza Fûzûl, the man who had been nominated to succeed him in his situation, and who did not cease exclaiming, 'Your place has been empty, and our eyes are enlightened,' as long as he remained in the room. At length, a great bustle was heard, the doors were opened, and an officer from the king was announced, who commanded the poet forthwith to repair to the presence, which he did in the very clothes, boots, dust and all, in which he had travelled.

The party then broke up, and I left the house in the determination of returning the next day; but as I was going out of

the yard, I met the Nazir, with whom I had had a conversation as before related. He did not appear to me to be among the happy ones. 'In the name of Allah,' said I, 'you see that my words have proved true: the Khan is alive!' 'True enough,' answered he, with a sigh; 'he is alive; and may his life be a long one! but God is great!' and then making two or three more similar exclamations, he left me, apparently full of care and misery.

I passed the remainder of the day in strolling about, and building castles in the air. I walked through the bazars, went to the mosques, and lounged among the idlers, who are always to be found in great numbers about the gate of the royal palace. Here, the news of the day was the poet's return, and the reception which he had met with from the Shah. Some said, that his majesty, upon hearing of his arrival, had ordained that it could not be; that he was dead, and must be so. Others, that, on the contrary, the king was happy

at the intelligence, and had ordered ten tomauns to be given to the bearer of it. The truth, however, was this; the king had been disappointed at the poet's resurrection, because it destroyed the arrangements he had made with respect to his house and effects, and he was not disposed to give him a good reception; but Asker, who well knew his majesty's passion for poetry, and particularly of that kind which sings the royal praises, had long since foreseen the event, and had provided himself with an impromptu, which he had composed even when he was living an exile among the Turcomans. This he repeated at the proper moment; and thus the tide of the king's favour, which was running full against him, he entirely turned, and made it flow to his advantage. In short, he had his mouth filled with gold for his pains, was invested with a magnificent dress, and was reinstated in his situation and his possessions.

I lost no time in again congratulating my

adopted patron, and did not miss a single morning in attending his levee. Finding that he was favorably inclined towards me, I made known to him my situation, and entreated him either to give me a place in his household, or to recommend me as a servant to one of his acquaintance. I had found out that the Nazir's despondency at his master's return proceeded from the fear of being detected in certain frauds which he had committed on his property; and, as I hoped that I might eventually succeed to his situation, I expressed the greatest zeal for the poet's interest, and disclosed all that I knew concerning the delinquency of his servant. However, I did not succeed; for whether he had a clearer insight into characters than I gave him credit for, or whether the Nazir managed to prove his innocence, and make me suspected, I know not; but the fact was, that he kept his place, and I continued to be an attendant at the levees.

At length, one morning Asker called me

to him, and said, 'Hajjî, my friend, you know how thankful I have always expressed myself for your kindness to me when we were prisoners together in the hands of the Turcomans, and now I will prove my gratitude. I have recommended you strongly to Mirza Ahmak, the king's *Hakîm Bashi*, or chief physician, who is in want of a servant; and I make no doubt, that if you give him satisfaction, he will teach you his art, and put you in the way of making your fortune. You have only to present yourself before him, saying that you come from me, and he will immediately assign you an employment.

I had no turn for the practice of physic, and recollecting the story which had been related to me by the dervish, I held the profession in contempt: but my case was desperate; I had spent my last *dînar*, and therefore I had nothing left me but to accept of the doctor's place. Accordingly, the next morning I proceeded to his house, which was situated in the neighbourhood of

the palace; and as I entered a dull, neglected court yard, I there found several sick persons, some squatted against the wall, others supported by their friends, and others again with bottles in their hands, waiting the moment when the physician should leave the women's apartments to transact business in public. I proceeded to an open window, where those who were not privileged to enter the room stood, and there I took my station until I should be called in. Within the room were several persons who came to pay their court to the doctor (for every man who is an officer of the court has his levee), and from remarking them, I learnt how necessary it was, in order to advance in life, to make much of every thing, even the dog or the cat, if they came in my way, of him who can have access to the ear of men in power. I made my reflections upon the miseries I had already undergone, and was calculating how long it would take me to go through a course of cringing and flattery to be entitled to the same sorts of

attention myself, when I perceived, by the bows of those near me, that the doctor had seated himself at the window, and that the business of the day had commenced.

The Hakîm was an old man, with an eye sunk deep in his head, high cheek bones, and a scanty beard. He had a considerable bend in his back, and his usual attitude, when seated, was that of a projecting chin, his head reclining back between his shoulders, and his hands resting on his girdle, whilst his elbows formed two triangles on each side of his body. He made short snappish questions, gave little hums at the answers, and seemed to be thinking of any thing but the subject before him. When he heard the account of the ailments of those who had come to consult him, and had said a few words to his little circle of parasites, he looked at me, and after I had told him that I was the person of whom the poet had spoken, he fixed his little sharp eyes upon me for a second or two, and then desired me to wait, for that

he wished to speak to me in private. Accordingly, he soon after got up, and went out of the room, and I was called upon to attend him in a small separate court, closely walled on all sides, except on the one where was situated the *khelwet*, or private room, in which the doctor was seated.

CHAPTER XIX.

Hajjî Baba gets into the service of the king's physician. Of the manner he was first employed by him.

As soon as I appeared, the doctor invited me into the room, and requested me to be seated; which I did with all the humility which it is the etiquette for an inferior to show towards his superior for so great an honour.

He informed me, that the poet had spoken very favorably of me, and had said that I was a person to be depended upon, particularly on account of my discretion and prudence; that I had seen a great deal of life; that I was fertile in expedients; and that if any business in which circumspection and secrecy were necessary was intrusted to me, I should conduct it with all the ability required. I bowed repeatedly as he spoke,

and kept my hands respectfully before me, covered with the border of my sleeve, whilst I took care that my feet were also completely hid. He then continued, and said—'I have occasion for a person of your description precisely at this moment, and as I put great confidence in the recommendation of my friend Asker, it is my intention to make use of your good offices; and if you succeed according to my expectations, you may rest assured that it will be well for you, and that I shall not remain unmindful of your services.'

Then requesting me to approach nearer to him, and in a low and confidential tone of voice, he said, looking over his shoulders as if afraid of being overheard; 'Hajjî, you must know that an ambassador from the Franks is lately arrived at this court, in whose suite there is a doctor. This infidel has already acquired considerable reputation here. He treats his patients in a manner quite new to us, and has arrived with a chest full of medicines, of which we

do not even know the names. He pretends to the knowledge of a great many things of which we have never yet heard in Persia. He makes no distinction between hot and cold diseases, and hot and cold remedies, as Galenus and Avicenna have ordained, but gives mercury by way of a cooling medicine; stabs the belly with a sharp instrument for wind in the stomach*; and, what is worse than all, pretends to do away with the small-pox altogether, by infusing into our nature a certain extract of cow, a discovery which one of their philosophers has lately made. Now this will never do, Hajjî. The small-pox has always been a comfortable source of revenue to me; I cannot afford to lose it, because an infidel chooses to come here and treat us like cattle. We cannot allow him to take the bread out of our mouths. But the reason why I particularly want your

* This alludes to tapping in cases of dropsy; an operation unknown among the Persians, until our surgeons taught it them.

help proceeds from the following cause. The grand vizier was taken ill, two days ago, of a strange uneasiness, after having eat more than his usual quantity of raw lettuce and cucumber, steeped in vinegar and sugar. This came to the Frank ambassador's ears, who, in fact, was present at the eating of the lettuce, and he immediately sent his doctor to him, with a request that he might be permitted to administer relief. The grand vizier and the ambassador, it seems, had not been upon good terms for some time, because the latter was very urgent that some demand of a political nature might be conceded to him, which the vizier, out of consideration for the interests of Persia, was obliged to deny; and, therefore, thinking that this might be a good opportunity of conciliating the infidel, and of coming to a compromise, he agreed to accept of the doctor's services. Had I been apprised of the circumstance in time, I should easily have managed to put a stop to the proceeding; but the doctor did not

lose an instant in administering his medicine, which, I hear, only consisted of one little white and tasteless pill. From all accounts, and as ill luck would have it, the effect it has produced is something quite marvellous. The grand vizier has received such relief, that he can talk of nothing else; he says, 'that he felt the pill drawing the damp from the very tips of his fingers;' and that now he has discovered in himself such newness of strength and energy, that he laughs at his old age, and even talks of making up the complement of wives permitted to him by our blessed Prophet. But the mischief has not stopped here; the fame of this medicine, and of the Frank doctor, has gone throughout the court; and the first thing which the king talked of at the *selam* (the audience) this morning, was of its miraculous properties. He called upon the grand vizier to repeat to him all that he had before said upon the subject; and as he talked of the wonders that it had produced upon his person, a general murmur of ap-

plause and admiration was heard throughout the assembly. His majesty then turned to me, and requested me to explain the reason why such great effects should proceed from so small a cause, when I was obliged to answer, stooping as low as I could to hide my confusion, and kissing the earth—'I am your sacrifice: O king of kings, I have not yet seen the drug which the infidel doctor has given to your majesty's servant, the grand vizier; but as soon as I have, I will inform your majesty of what it consists. In the meanwhile, your humble slave beseeches the Centre of the Universe to recollect, that the principal agent, on this occasion, must be an evil spirit, an enemy to the true faith, since he is an instrument in the hands of an infidel; of one who calls our holy Prophet a cheat, and who disowns the all-powerful decrees of predestination.'

'Having said this, in order to shake his growing reputation, I retired in deep cogitation how I might get at the secrets of the

infidel, and particularly inquire into the nature of his prescription, which has performed such miracles; and you are come most opportunely to my assistance. You must immediately become acquainted with him; and I shall leave it to your address to pick his brain and worm his knowledge out of him; but as I wish to procure a specimen of the very medicine which he administered to the grand vizier, being obliged to give an account of it to-morrow to the Shah, you must begin your services to me by eating much of lettuce and raw cucumber, and of making yourself as sick to the full as his highness the vizier. You may then apply to the Frank, who will, doubtless, give you a duplicate of the celebrated pill, which you will deliver over to me.'

'But,' said I, who had rather taken fright at this extraordinary proposal, 'how shall I present myself before a man whom I do not know? besides, such marvellous stories are related of the Europeans, that I

should be puzzled in what manner to behave: pray give me some instructions how to act.'

'Their manners and customs are totally different to ours, that is true,' replied Mirza Ahmak, 'and you may form some idea of them, when I tell you, that instead of shaving their heads, and letting their beards grow, as we do, they do the very contrary, for not a vestige of hair is to be seen on their chins, and their hair is as thick on their heads as if they had made a vow never to cut it off: then, they sit on little platforms, whilst we squat on the ground; they take up their food with claws made of iron, whilst we use our fingers; they are always walking about, we keep seated; they wear tight clothes, we loose ones; they write from left to right, we from right to left; they never pray, we five times a day; in short, there is no end to what might be related of them; but most certain it is, that they are the most filthy people on the earth, for they hold nothing to be un-

clean; they eat all sorts of animals, from a pig to a tortoise, without the least scruple, and that without first cutting their throats; they will dissect a dead body, without requiring any purification after it, and perform all the brute functions of their nature, without ever thinking it necessary to go to the hot bath, or even rubbing themselves with sand after them.'

'And is it true,' said I, 'that they are so irascible, that if perchance their word is doubted, and they are called liars, they will fight on such an occasion till they die?'

'That is also said of them,' answered the doctor; 'but the case has not happened to me yet; however, I must warn you of one thing, which is, that if they happen to admire any thing that you possess, you must not say to them, as you would to one of us, 'It is a present to you, it is your property,' lest they should take you at your word and keep it, which you know would be inconvenient, and not what you in-

tended; but you must endeavour as much as possible to speak what you think, for that is what they like.'

'But then, if such is the case,' said I, 'do not you think that the Frank doctor will find me out with a lie in my mouth; pretending to be sick when I am well; asking medicine from him for myself, when I want it for another?'

'No, no,' said the Mirza; 'you are to be sick, really sick, you know, and then it will be no lie. Go, Hajjî, my friend,' said he, putting his arm round my neck: 'go, eat your cucumbers immediately, and let me have the pill by this evening.' And then coaxing me, and preventing me from making any farther objections to his unexpected request, he gently pushed me out of the room, and I left him, scarcely knowing whether to laugh or to cry at the new posture which my affairs had taken. To sicken without any stipulated reward was what I could not consent to do, so I retraced my steps, with a determination of

making a bargain with my patron; but, when I got to the room, he was no longer there, having apparently retreated into his harem; and, therefore, I was obliged to proceed on my errand.

CHAPTER XX.

He succeeds in deceiving two of the faculty, getting a pill from one, and a piece of gold from the other.

I INQUIRED my way to the ambassador's house, and actually set off with the intention of putting the doctor's wishes into execution, and getting, if possible, a writhing disorder on the road; but, upon more mature reflection, I recollected that a stomach ache was not a marketable commodity which might be purchased at a moment's notice; for although lettuce and cucumber might disagree with an old grand vizier, yet it was a hundred to one but they would find an easy digestion in a young person like me. However, I determined to obtain the pill by stratagem, if I could not procure it in a more direct manner. I considered that if I feigned to be ill, the doctor would very probably detect me, and turn me out of his

house for a cheat, so I preferred the easier mode of passing myself off for one of the servants of the royal harem, and then making out some story by which I might attain my end. I accordingly stepped into one of the old clothes' shops in the bazar, and hired a cloak for myself, such as the scribes wear; and then substituting a roll of paper in my girdle instead of a dagger, I flattered myself that I might pass for something more than a common servant.

I soon found out where the ambassador dwelt. Bearing in mind all that Mirza Ahmak had told me, I rather approached the door of the doctor's residence with fear and hesitation. I found the avenues to it crowded with poor women, bearing infants in their arms, who, I was told, came to receive the new-fashioned preservative against the small-pox. This, it was supposed for political reasons, the Franks were anxious to promote; and, as the doctor performed the operation gratis, he had no lack of patients, particularly of the poorer sort, who

could not approach a Persian doctor without a present, or a good fee in their hand.

On entering, I found a man seated in the middle of the room, near an elevated wooden platform, upon which were piled boxes, books, and a variety of instruments and utensils, the uses of which were unknown to me. He was in dress and appearance the most extraordinary looking infidel I had ever seen: His chin and upper lip were without the vestige of a hair upon them, as like an eunuch as possible. He kept his head most disrespectfully uncovered, and wore a tight bandage round his neck, with other contrivances on the sides of his cheeks, as if he were anxious to conceal some wound or disease. His clothes were fitted so tight to his body, and his outward coat in particular was cut off at such sharp angles, that it was evident cloth was a scarce and dear commodity in his country. The lower part of his dress was particularly improper, and he kept his boots on in his room, without any con-

sideration for the carpet he was treading upon, which struck me as a custom subversive of all decorum.

I found that he talked our language; for, as soon as he saw me, he asked me how I did, and then immediately remarked that it was a fine day, which was so self-evident a truth, that I immediately agreed to it. I then thought it necessary to make him some fine speeches, and flattered him to the best of my abilities, informing him of the great reputation he had already acquired in Persia; that Locman* was a fool when compared to one of his wisdom; and that as for his contemporaries, the Persian physicians, they were not fit to handle his pestle for him. To all this he said nothing. I then told him that the king himself, having heard of the wonderful effects of his me-

* Locman is the most celebrated of the Eastern sages, and is supposed by some to be the same as Æsop. The title usually given to a doctor in Persia is *Locman al zeman*, the Locman of his day.

dicine upon the person of his grand vizier, had ordered his historian to insert the circumstance in the annals of the empire, as one of the most extraordinary events of his reign,—that a considerable sensation had been produced in his majesty's seraglio, for many of the ladies had immediately been taken ill, and were longing to make a trial of his skill,—that the king's favourite Georgian slave was, in fact, at this moment in great pain,—that I had been deputed by the chief eunuch, owing to a special order from his majesty, to procure medicine similar to that which the first minister had taken,—and I concluded my speech by requesting the doctor immediately to furnish me with some.

He seemed to ponder over what I had told him; and, after reflecting a short time, said that it was not his custom to administer medicine to his patients without first seeing them, for by so doing he would probably do more harm than good; but that if he found that the slave was in

want of his aid, he should be very happy to attend her.

I answered to this, that as to seeing the face of the Georgian slave, that was totally out of the question, for no man ever was allowed that liberty in Persia, excepting her husband. In cases of extreme necessity, perhaps a doctor might be permitted to feel a woman's pulse, but then it must be done when a veil covers the hand.

To which the Frank replied, 'In order to judge of my patient's case I must not only feel the pulse, but see the tongue also.'

'Looking at the tongue is totally new in Persia,' said I; 'and I am sure you could never be indulged with such a sight in the seraglio, without a special order from the king himself; an eunuch would rather cut out his own tongue first.'

'Well, then,' said the doctor, 'recollect, that if I deliver my medicine to you, I do so without taking any responsibility upon

myself for its effects; for if it does not cure it may perhaps kill.'

When I had assured him that no harm or prejudice could possibly accrue to him, he opened a large chest, which appeared to be full of drugs, and taking therefrom the smallest quantity of a certain white powder, he mixed it up, with some bread, into the form of a pill, and putting it into paper gave it me, with proper directions how it should be administered. Seeing that he made no mystery of his knowledge, I began to question him upon the nature and properties of this particular medicine, and upon his practice in general. He answered me without any reserve; not like our Persian doctors, who only make a parade of fine words, and who adjust every ailment that comes before them to what they read in their Galen, their Hippocrates, and their Abou Avicenna.

When I had learned all I could, I left him with great demonstration of friendship

and thankfulness, and immediately returned to Mirza Ahmak, who doubtless was waiting for me with great impatience. Having divested myself of my borrowed cloak and resumed my own dress, I appeared before him with a face made up for the occasion, for I wished to make him believe that the lettuce and cucumbers had done their duty. At every word I pretended to receive a violent twitch, and acted my part so true to life, that the stern and inflexible nature of Mirza Ahmak himself was moved into somewhat like pity for me.

'There! there,' said I, as I entered his apartment, 'in the name of Allah take your prize:' and then pretending to be bent double, I made the most horrid grimaces, and uttered deep groans: 'there! I have followed your orders, and now throw myself upon your generosity.' He endeavoured to take the object of his search from me, but I kept it fast; and whilst I gave him to understand that I expected prompt reward, I made indications of an intention to swallow

it, unless he actually gave me something in hand. So fearful was he of not being able to answer the king's interrogatories concerning the pill, so anxious to get it into his possession, that he actually pressed a gold piece upon me. No lover could sue his mistress with more earnestness to grant him a favour than the doctor did me for my pill. I should very probably have continued the deceit a little longer, and have endeavoured to extract another piece from him; but when I saw him preparing a dose of his own mixture to ease my pain, I thought it high time to finish, and pretending all of a sudden to have received relief, I gave up my prize.

When once he had got possession, he looked at it with intense eagerness, and turned it over and over on his palm, without appearing one whit more advanced in his knowledge than before. At length, after permitting him fully to exhaust his conjectures, I told him that the Frank doctor had made no secret in saying that it was

composed of *jivch*, or mercury. 'Mercury, indeed!' exclaimed Mirza Ahmak—'just as if I did not know that. And so, because this infidel, this dog of an *Isauvi**, chooses to poison us with mercury, I am to lose my reputation, and my prescriptions (such as his father never even saw in a dream) are to be turned into ridicule. Whoever heard of mercury as a medicine? Mercury is cold, and lettuce and cucumber are cold also. You would not apply ice to dissolve ice? The ass does not know the first rudiments of his profession. No, Hajjî, this will never do; we must not permit our beards to be laughed at in this manner.'

He continued to inveigh for a considerable time against his rival; and would, no doubt, have continued to do so much longer, but he was stopped by a message from the king, who ordered him to repair forthwith to his presence. In the greatest trepidation he immediately put himself

* *Isauvi*, a follower of Jesus.

into his court dress, exchanged his common black lamb's skin cap for one wound about with a shawl, huddled on his red cloth stockings, called for his horse, and, taking the pill with him, went off in great hurry, and full of the greatest apprehension at what might be the result of the audience.

CHAPTER XXI.

He describes the manner in which the Shah of Persia takes medicine.

THE doctor's visit to the king had taken place late in the evening; and as soon as he returned from it he called for me. I found him apparently in great agitation, and full of anxiety. 'Hajjî,' said he, when I appeared, 'come close to me;' and having sent every one else out of the room, he said in a whisper, 'this infidel doctor must be disposed of somehow or other. What do you think has happened? The Shah has consulted him; he had him in private conference for an hour this morning, without my being apprised of it. His majesty sent for me to tell me its result; and I perceive that the Frank has already gained great influence. It seems that the king gave him

the history of his complaints—of his debility, of his old asthma, and of his imperfect digestion, but talked in raptures of the wretch's sagacity and penetration; for merely by looking at the tongue and feeling the pulse before the infidel was told what was the state of the case, he asked whether his majesty* did not use the hot-baths very frequently; whether, when he smoked, he did not immediately bring on a fit of coughing; and whether, in his food, he was not particularly addicted to pickles, sweetmeats, and rice swimming in butter? The king has given him three days to consider his case, to consult his books, and to gather the opinions of the Frank sages on subjects so important to the state of Persia, and to compose such a medicine as will entirely restore and renovate his constitution. The Centre of the Universe then asked my

* This is the most approved form of speech among well educated Persians, whenever any allusion to the mysteries of the harem is intended.

opinion, and requested me to speak boldly upon the natures and properties of Franks in general, and of their medicines. I did not lose this opportunity of giving utterance to my sentiments; so, after the usual preface to my speech, I said, 'that as to their natures, the Shah, in his profound wisdom, must know, that they were an unbelieving and an unclean race; for that they treated our Prophet as a cheat, and eat pork and drank wine without any scruple; that they were women in looks, and in manners bears; that they ought to be held in the greatest suspicion, for their ultimate object (see what they had done in India) was to take kingdoms, and to make Shahs and Nabobs their humble servants. As to their medicines,' I exclaimed, 'Heaven preserve your majesty from them! they are just as treacherous in their effects as the Franks are in their politics:—with what we give to procure death, they pretend to work their cures. Their principal ingredient is mercury (and here I produced my

pill); and they use their instruments and knives so freely, that I have heard it said they will cut off a man's limbs to save his life.' I then drew such a picture of the fatal effects likely to proceed from the foreign prescription, that I made the Shah promise that he would not take it without using every precaution that his prudence and wisdom might suggest. To this he consented; and as soon as the Frank shall have sent in the medicine which he is preparing, I shall be summoned to another interview. 'Now, Hajjî,' added the doctor, 'the Shah must not touch the infidel's physic; for if perchance it were to do good, I am a lost man. Who will ever consult Mirza Ahmak again? No, we must avert the occurrence of such an event, even if I were obliged to take all his drugs myself.'

We parted with mutual promises of doing every thing in our power to thwart the infidel doctor; and three days after Mirza Ahmak was again called before the

king in order to inspect the promised ordonnance, and which consisted of a box of pills. He, of course, created all sorts of suspicions against their efficacy, threw out some dark hints about the danger of receiving any drug from the agent of a foreign power, and, finally, left the Shah in the determination of referring the case to his ministers. The next day, at the usual public audience, when the Shah was seated on his throne, and surrounded by his prime vizier, his lord high treasurer, his minister for the interior, his principal secretary of state, his lord chamberlain, his master of the horse, his principal master of the ceremonies, his doctor in chief, and many other of the great officers of his household, addressing himself to his grand vizier, he stated the negotiations which he had entered into with the foreign physician, now resident at his court, for the restoration and the renovation of the royal person; that at the first conference, the said foreign physician, after a due inspection of the royal

person, had reported that there existed several symptoms of debility. That at the second, after assuring the Shah that he had for three whole days employed himself in consulting his books and records, and gathering from them the opinions of his own country sages on the subject, he had combined the properties of various drugs into one whole, which, if taken interiorly, would produce effects so wonderful, that no talisman could come in competition with it. His majesty then said, that he had called into his councils his Hakîm bashi, or head physician, who, in his anxiety for the weal of the Persian monarchy, had deeply pondered over the ordonnances of the foreigner, and had set his face against them, owing to certain doubts and apprehensions that had crept into his mind, which consisted, 1st, whether it were politic to deliver over the internal administration of the royal person to foreign regulations and ordonnances; and, 2d, whether, in the remedy prescribed, there might not exist

such latent and destructive effects, as would endanger, undermine, and, finally, overthrow that royal person and constitution, which it was supposed to be intended to restore and renovate. 'Under these circumstances,' said the Centre of the Universe, raising his voice at the time, 'I have thought it advisable to pause before I proceeded in this business; and have resolved to lay the case before you, in order that you may, in your united wisdoms, frame such an opinion as may be fitting to be placed before the king: and in order that you may go into the subject with a complete knowledge of the case, I have resolved, as a preparatory act, that each of you, in your own persons, shall partake of this medicine, in order that both you and I may judge of its various effects.'

To this most gracious speech the grand vizier and all the courtiers made exclamations, 'May the king live for ever! May the royal shadow never be less! We are happy not only to take physic, but to lay

down our lives in your majesty's service! We are your sacrifice, your slaves! May God give the Shah health, and a victory over all his enemies! Upon which, the chief of the valets was ordered to bring the foreign physician's box of pills from the harem, and delivered it to the Shah in a golden salver. His majesty then ordered the Hakîm bashi to approach, and delivering the box to him, ordered him to go round to all present, beginning with the prime vizier, and then to every man according to his rank, administering to each a pill.

This being done, the whole assembly took the prescribed gulp; after which ensued a general pause, during which the king looked carefully into each man's face to mark the first effects of the medicine. When the wry faces had subsided, the conversation took a turn upon the affairs of Europe; upon which his majesty asked a variety of questions, which were answered by the different persons present in the best manner they were able.

The medicine now gradually began to show its effects. The lord high treasurer first, a large coarse man, who to this moment had stood immovable, merely saying *belli, belli*, yes, yes, whenever his majesty opened his mouth to speak, now appeared uneasy, for what he had swallowed had brought into action a store of old complaints which were before lying dormant. The eyes of all had been directed towards him, which had much increased his perturbed state; when the chief secretary of state, a tall, thin, lathy man, turned deadly pale, and began to stream from every pore. He was followed by the minister for the interior, whose unhappy looks seemed to supplicate a permission from his majesty to quit his august presence. All the rest in succession were moved in various ways, except the prime vizier, a little old man, famous for a hard and unyielding nature, and who appeared to be laughing in his sleeve at the misery which his compeers in office were undergoing.

When the Shah perceived that the medicine had taken effect, he dismissed the assembly, ordering Mirza Ahmak, as soon as he could ascertain the history of each pill, to give him an official report of the whole transaction, and then retired into his harem.

The crafty old doctor had now his rival within his power; of course, he set the matter in such a light before the king, that his majesty was deterred from making the experiment of the foreign physician's ordonnance, and it was forthwith consigned to oblivion. When he next saw me, and after he had made me acquainted with the preceding narrative, he could not restrain his joy and exultation. 'We have conquered, friend Hajjî,' would he say to me. 'The infidel thought that we were fools; but we will teach him what Persians are. Whose dog is he, that he should aspire to so high an honour as prescribing for a king of kings? No, that is left to such men as I. What do we care about his new discoveries?

As our fathers did, so are we contented to do. The prescription that cured our ancestors shall cure us; and what Locman and Abou Avicenna ordained, we may be satisfied to ordain after them.' He then dismissed me, to make fresh plans for destroying any influence or credit that the new physician might acquire, and for preserving his own consequence and reputation at court.

CHAPTER XXII.

Hajji Baba asks the doctor for a salary, and of the success of his demand.

I HAD thus far lived with the doctor more as a friend than as a servant; for he permitted me to sit in his presence, to eat with him, and even to smoke his pipe, whilst at the same time I associated with his servants, eat, drank, and smoked with them also; but I found that this sort of life in nowise suited my views and expectations. The only money which I had received from him was the gold coin aforementioned, for which I was indebted to my own ingenuity; and, as things went, it appeared that it would be the last. I was therefore resolved to come to an explanation with him, and accordingly seized the opportunity when he was elated with his success over the European doctor, to open the subject of my grievances.

He had just returned from the imperial gate, after having seen the Shah; who, by his account, had been very gracious to him, having kept him standing without his shoes only two hours, by the side of a stone fountain, instead of six, which he generally does. 'What a good king he is!' he exclaimed, 'how affable, how considerate! It is impossible to say how much kindness he shows to me. He gave abuse to the European doctor, all out of compliment to my abilities, and said that he is not fit to hold my shoes. He then ordered his favourite running footman to bring me a present of two partridges, which were caught by the royal hawks.'

I observed, 'Yes, the king says true. Who is your equal now a-days in Persia? Happy Shah! to possess such a treasure. What are the Franks, that they should talk of medicine? If they want learning, science, and skill, let them look to Mirza Ahmak.'

Upon this, with a smile of self-complacency, he took the pipe from his own mouth

and gave it to me, pulled up his mustaches, and stroked his beard.

'*Inshallah!* may it please God,' I continued to say, 'that I also may share in the glory of your reputation; but I am like a dog, I am nothing, I am not even like the piece of clay, which was scented by the company of the rose.'

'How!' said the doctor; 'why are you out of spirits?'

'I will leave you to judge, and relate a story,' said I. 'Once upon a time there was a dog, who in looks and manners was so like a wolf, that the wolves used to admit him into their society. He ate, drank, and killed sheep with them, and, in short, was every thing that a wolf ought to be; at the same time, he lived with his fellow dogs like a dog, and was admitted to all their parties. But, little by little, the dogs perceived that he associated with wolves, and became shy of him; and it also happened that the wolves discovered that he was in fact a dog, and did not like to admit him any longer into

their circles; so between both, the poor dog became neglected and miserable; and, unable to bear his undefined state any longer, he determined to make a decided effort to become either a dog or a wolf. I am that dog!' exclaimed I: 'you permit me to sit and smoke with you, who are so much my superior; you talk to and consult me, and I am even admitted to the society of your friends; but what does that benefit me? I am still a servant, without enjoying any of the advantages of one: I get nothing. I pray you therefore to appoint me to the situation you wish me to hold in your service, and to fix a salary upon me.'

'A salary indeed!' exclaimed the doctor: 'I never give salaries. My servants get what they can from my patients, and you may do the same; they eat the remains of my dinner, and they receive a coat at the festival of the *No Rûz**—what can they

* The *No Rûz*, or the new day, is the great Persian festival, which takes place every spring, when the Sun enters Aries. It is not of Mohamedan origin, and dates from very remote antiquity.

want more?' At this moment entered the Shah's running-footman, bearing in his hands a silver tray, upon which were placed the two partridges that his majesty had presented to the doctor, and which in great form he gave into his hands, who, rising from his seat, carried the tray to his head, and exclaimed, 'May the king's kindness never be less!—may his wealth increase, and may he live for ever!'

He then was called upon to make the bearer a present. He sent first five piastres*, which the servant returned with great indignation. He then sent one tomaun: this also was sent back, until at length in despair he sent five tomauns, which, it was intimated, was the sum proper to be given. This disagreeable circumstance dissipated all the pleasure which such a present had produced, and the Hakîm, in his rage, permitted himself to use such expressions, which, if reported to the king, would have brought him into considerable trouble. 'A present,

* A piastre is about two shillings.

indeed!' said he; 'I wish such presents were in the other world! 'Tis thus we pay the wages of the king's servants—a set of rapacious rascals, without either shame or conscience! And the worst of it is, we must pay them handsomely, or else whenever it happens that I get the bastinado on the soles of my feet, which come it will, they, who perform the operation, will show me no mercy. Let me not forget what Saadi says, that you can no more depend upon the friendship of a king than you can upon the voice of a child; because the former changes on the slightest suspicion, the latter in the course of a night.'

Upon this reflection, the doctor began to be alarmed at what he had said at the outset of his speech; and, with all the terrors of the *felek* before him, he seemed quite reconciled to the loss of his five tomauns.

I found that this would not be the best moment to resume the subject of my expectations, and therefore reserved it for some future opportunity; but I had heard enough

to settle in my own mind, that I would leave the 'Locman of the age,' whenever an opportunity should offer, and for the present to content myself with being neither dog nor wolf.

CHAPTER XXIII.

He becomes dissatisfied with his situation, is idle, and falls in love.

Discontented with my present lot, and uncertain as to my future prospects, my days passed on in total idleness; and, as I had no inclination to pursue the profession of physic, which many before me had done quite on as slender a foundation as the one I had acquired, I cared little for those pursuits which engaged Mirza Ahmak. I should very probably have left him instantly, if a circumstance had not occurred, arising from the very state of unprofitableness in which I lived, which detained me in his house. The feelings to which it gave rise so entirely absorbed every other consideration, that I became their slave; and so violent were the emotions which they created, that I verily believe that Majnoun,

in the height of his phrensy, could not have been madder than I. After this, it is needless to mention that I was in love.

The spring had passed over, and the first heats of summer, which now began to make themselves felt, had driven most of the inhabitants of the city to spread their beds and sleep on the house-tops. As I did not like to pass my night in company of the servants, the carpet-spreaders and the cook, who generally herded together in a room below, I extended my bed in a corner of the terrace, which overlooked the inner court of the doctor's house, in which were situated the apartments of the women. This court was a square, into which the windows of the different chambers looked, and was planted in the centre with rose-bushes, jessamines, and poplar-trees. A square wooden platform was erected in the middle, upon which mattresses were spread, where the inhabitants reposed during the great heats. I had seen several women seated in different parts of the court, but had never been par-

ticularly struck by the appearance of any one of them; and indeed had I been so, perhaps I should never have thought of looking at them again; for as soon as I was discovered, shouts of abuse were levelled at me, and I was called by every odious name that they could devise.

One night, however, soon after the sun had set, as I was preparing my bed, I perchance looked over a part of the wall that was a little broken down, and on a slip of terrace that was close under it I discovered a female, who was employed in assorting and spreading out tobacco-leaves. Her blue veil was negligently thrown over her head, and as she stooped, the two long tresses which flowed from her forehead hung down in so tantalizing a manner as nearly to screen all her face, but still left so much of it visible, that it created an intense desire in me to see the remainder. Every thing that I saw in her announced beauty. Her hands were small, and dyed with *khena**;

* This dye is used throughout the whole of

her feet were equally small; and her whole air and form bespoke loveliness and grace. I gazed upon her until I could no longer contain my passion; I made a slight noise, which immediately caused her to look up, and before she could cover herself with her veil, I had had time to see the most enchanting features that the imagination can conceive, and to receive a look from eyes so bewitching, that I immediately felt my heart in a blaze. With apparent displeasure she covered herself; but still I could perceive that she had managed her veil with so much art, that there was room for a certain dark and sparkling eye to look at me, and to enjoy my agitation. As I continued to gaze upon her, she at length said, though still going on with her work, 'Why do you look at me? It is criminal.'

Asia, and produces a strong orange, or auburn colour. The Persians dye the whole of their hands as far as the wrist with it, and also the soles of their feet. The Turks more commonly only tinge the nails: both use it for the hair.

'For the sake of the sainted Hosien,' I exclaimed, 'do not turn from me; it is no crime to love: your eyes have made roast meat of my heart: by the mother that bore you, let me look upon your face again.'

In a more subdued voice she answered me, 'Why do you ask me? You know it is a crime for a woman to let her face be seen; and you are neither my father, my brother, nor my husband; I do not even know who you are. Have you no shame, to talk thus to a maid?'

At this moment she let her veil fall, as if by chance, and I had time to look again upon her face, which was even more beautiful than I had imagined. Her eyes were large and peculiarly black, and fringed by long lashes, which, aided by the collyrium with which they were tinged, formed a sort of ambuscade, from which she levelled her shafts. Her eyebrows were finely arched, and nature had brought them together just over her nose, in so strong a line, that there was no need of art to join them together.

Her nose was aquiline, her mouth small, and full of sweet expression; and in the centre of her chin was a dimple which she kept carefully marked with a blue puncture. Nothing could equal the beauty of her hair; it was black as jet, and fell in long tresses down her back. In short, I was wrapped in amazement at her beauty. The sight of her explained to me many things which I had read in our poets, of cypress forms, tender fawns, and sugar-eating parrots. It seemed to me that I could gaze at her for ever, and not be tired; but still I felt a great desire to leap over the wall and touch her. My passion was increasing, and I was on the point of approaching her, when I heard the name of *Zeenab* repeated several times, with great impatience, by a loud shrill voice; upon which my fair one left the terrace in haste, and I remained riveted to the place where I had first seen her. I continued there for a long time, in the hope that she might return, but to no purpose. I lent my ear to every noise, but nothing

was to be heard below but the same angry voice, which, by turns, appeared to attack every thing, and every body, and which could belong to no one but the doctor's wife; a lady, who, as report would have it, was none of the mildest of her sex, and who kept her good man in great subjection.

The day had now entirely closed in, and I was about retiring to my bed in despair, when the voice was heard again, exclaiming, 'Zeenab, where are you going to? Why do you not retire to bed?'

I indistinctly heard the answer of my charmer, but soon guessed what it had been, when I saw her appear on the terrace again. My heart beat violently, and I was about to leap over the wall, which separated us, when I was stopped by seeing her taking up a basket, in which she had gathered her tobacco, and make a hasty retreat; but just as she was disappearing, she said to me, in a low tone of voice, 'Be here to-morrow night.' These words thrilled through my whole frame, in

a manner that I had never before felt, and I did not cease to repeat them, and ponder over them, until, through exhaustion, I fell into a feverish doze, and I did not awaken on the following morning until the beams of the sun shone bright in my face.

CHAPTER XXIV.

He has an interview with the fair Zeenab, who relates how she passes her time in the doctor's harem.

'So,' said I, when I had well rubbed my eyes: 'so, now I am in love? Well! we shall see what will come of it. Who and what she is we shall know to-night, so please it; and if she is any thing which belongs to the doctor, may his house be ruined if I do not teach him how to keep a better watch over his property. As for marriage, that is out of the question. Who would give a wife to me; I who have not even enough to buy myself a pair of trowsers, much less to defray the expenses of a wedding? *Inshallah*, please God, that will take place one of these days, whenever I shall have got together some money; but now I will make play with love, and let the doctor pay for it.'

With that intention I forthwith got up and dressed myself; but it was with more care than usual. I combed my curls a great deal more than ordinary; I studied the tie of my girdle, and put my cap on one side. Then having rolled up my bed, and carried it into the servants' hall, I issued from home, with the intention of bathing, and making my person sweet, preparatory to my evening's assignation. I went to the bath, where I passed a great part of my morning in singing, and spent the remainder of the time, until the hour of meeting, in rambling about the town without any precise object in view.

At length the day drew towards its close, my impatience had reached its height, and I only waited for the termination of the *shâm*, or the evening's meal, to feign a head-ache, and to retire to rest. My ill luck would have it, that the doctor was detained longer than usual in his attendance upon the Shah, and as the servants dined after him, and ate his leavings, it was late

before I was at liberty. When that moment arrived, I was in a fever of expectation: the last glimmering of day tinged the western sky with a light shade of red, and the moon was just rising, when I appeared on the terrace with my bed under my arm. I threw it down and unfolded it in haste, and then, with a beating heart, flew to the broken wall. I looked over it with great precaution; but, to my utter disappointment, I saw nothing but the tobacco spread about in confused heaps, with baskets here and there, as if some work had been left unfinished. I looked all around, but saw no Zeenab. I coughed once or twice; no answer. The only sound which reached my ears was the voice of the doctor's wife, exerting itself upon some one within the house, although its shrillness pierced even the walls; yet I could not make out what was the cause of its being so excited, until of a sudden it burst into the open air with increasing violence.

'You talk of work to me, you daughter

of the devil! Who told you to go to the bath? What business had you at the tombs? I suppose I am to be your slave, and you are to take your pleasure. Why is not your work done? You shall neither eat, drink, nor sleep, until it is done, so go to it immediately; and if you come away until it be finished, *wallah! billah!* by the prophet, I will beat you till your nails drop off.' Upon this I heard some pushing and scuffling, and immediately perceived my fair one proceeding with apparent reluctance to the spot, which not a moment before I had despaired of seeing blessed with her presence. Oh what a wonderful thing is love! thought I to myself: how it sharpens the wits, and how fertile it is in expedients! I perceived at a glance how ingeniously my charmer had contrived every thing for our interview, and for a continuance of it without the fear of interruption. She saw, but took no notice of me until the storm below had ceased; and then, when every thing had relapsed into

silence, she came towards me, and, as the reader may well suppose, I was at her side in an instant. Ye, who know what love is, may, perhaps, conceive our raptures, for they are not to be expressed.

I learnt from my fair friend that she was the daughter of a Cûrdish chief, who, with his whole family, including his flocks and herds, had been made prisoner when she was quite a child; and that, from circumstances which she promised hereafter to relate to me, she had fallen into the hands of the doctor, whose slave she now was.

After the first burst of the sentiments which we felt towards each other had subsided, she gave way to the feelings of anger, which she felt for the treatment that she had just experienced. 'Ah!' she exclaimed, 'did you hear what that woman called me! woman, without faith, without religion! 'Tis thus she always treats me; she constantly gives me abuse; I am become less than a dog. Every body rails

at me; no one comes near me; my liver is become water, and my soul is withered up. Why should I be called a child of the devil? I am a Cûrd; I am a Yezeedi *. 'Tis true that we fear the devil, and who does not? but I am no child of his. Oh! that I could meet her in our mountains: she would then see what a Cûrdish girl can do.'

I endeavoured to console her as well as I could, and persuaded her to smother her resentment until she could find a good opportunity of revenging herself. She despaired at that ever coming to pass; because all her actions were so strictly watched, that she could scarcely go from one room to another without her mistress being aware of it. The fact was, so she informed me, that the doctor, who was a man of low family, had, by orders of the king, married one of his majesty's slaves,

* The Yezeedis are a tribe of the Cûrds, who are said to worship the devil.

who, from some misconduct, had been expelled the harem. She brought to the doctor no other dowry than an ill temper, and a great share of pride, which always kept her in mind of her former influence at court; and she therefore holds her present husband as cheap as the dust under her feet, and keeps him in a most pitiful state of subjection. He dares not sit down before her, unless she permits him, which she very seldom does; and she is moreover so jealous, that there is no slave in her harem who does not excite her suspicions. The doctor, on the other hand, who is very ambitious, and pleased with his exaltation, is also subject to the frailties of human nature, and is by no means insensible to the charms of the fair creatures, his slaves. Zeenab herself, so she informed me, is the peculiar object of his attentions, and consequently that of the jealousy of his wife, who permits no look, word, or sign to pass unnoticed. Much intrigue and espionage is carried on in the harem; and when

the lady herself goes to the bath or the mosque, as many precautions are taken about the distribution of the female slaves; with respect to time, place, and opportunity, as there would be in the arrangement of a wedding.

Having never seen more of the interior of an anderûn than what I recollected as a boy in my own family, I became surprised, and my curiosity was greatly excited in proportion as the fair Zeenab proceeded in her narrative of the history of her life in the doctor's house. 'We are five in the harem, besides our mistress,' said she: 'there is Shireen, the Georgian slave; then Nûr Jehan *, the Ethiopian slave girl; Fatmeh, the cook; and old Leilah, the duenna. My situation is that of hand-maid to the *khanum* †,

* The Persians give most magnificent names to their Negro slaves. Thus *Nûrjehan* means, light of the world.

† *Khanum* is the title usually given to a Persian lady, and is equivalent to madam.

so my mistress is called: I attend her pipe, I hand her her coffee, bring in the meals, go with her to the bath, dress and undress her, make her clothes, spread, sift, and pound tobacco, and stand before her. Shireen, the Georgian, is the *sanduk-dar*, or housekeeper; she has the care of the clothes of both my master and mistress, and indeed of the clothes of all the house; she superintends the expenses, lays in the corn for the house, as well as all the other provisions; she takes charge of all the porcelain, the silver, and other ware; and, in short, has the care of whatever is either precious or of consequence in the family. Nûr Jehan, the black slave, acts as *ferash*, or carpet-spreader: she does all the dirty work, spreads the carpets, sweeps the rooms, sprinkles the water over the court-yard, helps the cook, carries parcels and messages, and, in short, is at the call of every one. As for old Leilah, she is a sort of duenna over the young slaves: she

is employed in the out of door service, carries on any little affair that the khanum may have with other harems, and is also supposed to be a spy upon the actions of the doctor. Such as we are, our days are passed in peevish disputes; whilst, at the same time, some two of us are usually leagued in strict friendship, to the exclusion of the others. At this present moment I am at open war with the Georgian, who, some time ago, found that her good luck in life had forsaken her, and she in consequence contrived to procure a talisman from a dervish. She had no sooner obtained it, than on the very next day the khanum presented her with a new jacket; this so excited my jealousy, that I also made interest with the dervish to supply me with a talisman that should secure me a good husband. On that very same evening I saw you on the terrace. Conceive my happiness! But this has established a rivality between myself and Shireen, which

has ended in hatred, and we are now mortal enemies: perhaps we may as suddenly be friends again. I am now on the most intimate terms with Nûr Jehan, and at my persuasion she reports to the khanum every story unfavourable to my rival. Some rare sweetmeats, with *baklava* (sweet cake) made in the royal seraglio, were sent a few days ago from one of the Shah's ladies, as a present to our mistress; the rats eat a great part of them, and we gave out that the Georgian was the culprit, for which she received blows on the feet, which Nûr Jehan administered. I broke my mistress's favourite drinking-cup; Shireen incurred the blame, and was obliged to supply another. I know that she is plotting against me, for she is eternally closeted with Leilah, who is at present the confidant of our mistress. I take care not to eat or drink any thing which has passed through her hands to me, for fear of poison, and she returns me the same compliment. It is not, that our hatred amounts to poison yet, but such

precautions are constantly in use in all harems. We have as yet only once come to blows: she excited me to violent anger by spitting and saying, '*lahnet be Sheitan*,' curse be on the devil, which you know to the Yezeedies is a gross insult; when I fell upon her, calling her by every wicked name that I had learnt in Persian, and fastening upon her hair, of which I pulled out whole tresses by the roots. We were parted by Leilah, who came in for her share of abuse, and we continued railing at each other until our throats were quite dried up with rage and exhaustion. Our violence has much abated since this conflict; but her enmity is undiminished, for she continues to show her spite against me in every manner she can devise.'

Zeenab continued to entertain me in this manner until the first dawn of the morning, and when we heard the *muezzin** call

* The priest is so called who invites the Mahomedans to prayers from the minaret, or from the roof of the mosque.

the morning prayers from the mosque, we thought it prudent to retire; but not until we had made mutual promises of seeing each other as often as prudence would allow. We agreed, that whenever she had by her stratagems secured an opportunity for meeting, she should hang her veil upon the bough of a tree in the court, which could be seen from my terrace; and that if it were not there, I was to conclude that our interview on that night was impossible.

CHAPTER XXV.

The lovers meet again, and are very happy. Hajji Baba sings.

On the following evening, I ascended the terrace in the hope of seeing the signal of meeting; but in vain; no veil was visible; and I sat myself down in despair. The tobacco, and all the apparatus for cleaning it, had disappeared, and all was hushed below. Even the unceasing voice of the doctor's wife, which I now began to look upon as the most agreeable sound in nature, was wanting; and the occasional drag of a slipper, which I guessed might proceed from the crawl of old Leilah, was the only sign of an inhabitant. I had in succession watched the distant din of the king's band, the crash of the drums, and the swell of the trumpets, announcing sunset. I had listened to the various tones of the Muez-

zins, announcing the evening prayer; as well as to the small drum of the police, ordering the people to shut their shops, and retire to their homes. The cry of the sentinels on the watch-towers of the king's palace was heard at distant intervals; night had completely closed in upon me, and still the same silence prevailed in the doctor's harem.

'What can be the reason of this?' said I to myself. 'If they have been to the bath, they cannot have remained thus late: besides, the baths are open for the women in the mornings only. Some one must be sick, or there is a marriage, or a birth, or perhaps a burial; or the doctor may have received the bastinado; in short, I was killing myself with conjecture, when of a sudden a great beating at the door took place, and, as it opened, the clatter of slippers was heard, attended by the mingled sounds of many female voices, amongst which the well-known querulous tone of the khanum was prominent. Several lanterns passed to

and fro, which showed me the forms of the women, amongst whom, as they threw off their veils, I recognised that of my Zeenab. I determined to watch, in the hope that I might still be blessed with an interview; and, in fact, it was not long before she appeared. She stole to me with great precaution, to say that circumstances would prevent our meeting on this occasion, as she should not fail being missed; but that, certainly, ere long, she would contrive to secure an interview. In few words, she informed me that her mistress had been called upon to attend her sister (one of the ladies in the Shah's seraglio), who being taken suddenly ill, had expired almost immediately (it was supposed by poison administered by a rival), and that she had taken all her women with her, in order to increase the clamour of lamentation which was always made on such occasions; that they had been there since noon, rending the air with every proper exclamation, until they were all hoarse; that her mistress had

already torn her clothes, an etiquette which she had performed however with great care, considering that she wore a favourite jacket, having permitted only one or two seams of it to be ripped open. As the burial would take place the next day, it was necessary that they should be at their post early in the morning to continue the lamentations, a service for which she expected to receive a black handkerchief, and to eat sweetmeats. My fair one then left me, promising that she would do her utmost to secure a meeting on the following evening, and telling me not to forget the signal.

On getting up the next morning, I was much surprised to see it already made, and to perceive Zeenab below, beckoning me to go to her. I did not hesitate immediately to descend from the terrace by the same flight of steps which she used to ascend it, and then of a sudden I found myself in the very centre of the harem. An involuntary tremor seized me, when I reflected that I was in a place into which no

man with impunity is permitted to enter; but, fortified by the smiles and the unconstrained manner of my enchantress, I proceeded.

'Come, Hajjî,' said she, 'banish all fear; no one is here but Zeenab, and, if our luck is good, we may have the whole day to ourselves.'

'By what miracle,' exclaimed I, 'have you done this? Where is the khanum? where are the women? and, if they are not here, how shall I escape the doctor?'

'Do not fear,' she repeated again; 'I have barred all the doors; and should any one come, you will have time to escape before I open them: but there is no fear of that; all the women are gone to the funeral; and as for Mirza Ahmak, my mistress has taken care to dispose of him in such a manner, now that I am left by myself, that he will not dare to come within a parasang of his own house. You must know then,' said she, 'for I see you are all astonishment, that our destinies are on the rise, and that

it was a lucky hour when we first saw each other. Every thing plays into our hands. My rival, the Georgian, put it into the khanum's head, that Leilah, who is a professed weeper at burials, having learned the art, in all its branches, since a child, was a personage absolutely necessary on the present occasion, and that she ought to go in preference to me, who am a Cûrd, and can know but little of Persian customs: all this, of course, to deprive me of my black handkerchief, and other advantages. Accordingly, I have been left at home; and the whole party went off an hour ago to the house of the deceased. I pretended to be very angry, and opposed Leilah's taking my place with apparent warmth; but, thank Heaven, here we are, and so let us make the most of our time.'

Upon which she went into the kitchen to prepare a tray, containing a breakfast for me, whilst she left me to explore that which is hidden from all bachelors, namely, the interior of the harem.

I first went into the apartments of the khanum herself. It opened upon the garden by an immense sash-window, composed of stained glass; and in the corner was the accustomed seat of the lady, marked by a thick felt carpet, folded double, and a large down cushion, covered with cloth of gold, with two tassels at the extremities, and veiled by a thin outer covering of muslin. Near this seat was a looking-glass, prettily painted, and a box containing all sorts of curiosities; the *surmé* (collyrium) for the eyes, with its small instrument for applying it; some Chinese rouge; a pair of armlets, containing talismans; a *toû zoulfeh,* or an ornament to hitch into the hair, and hang on the forehead; a knife, scissars, and other things. A guitar and a tambourine lay close at hand. Her bed, rolled up in a distant corner, was enclosed in a large wrapper of blue and white cloth. Several pictures, without frames, were hung against the walls, and the shelf which occupied the top of the room was covered with different sorts of

glasses, basins, &c. In a corner were seen several bottles of Shiraz wine, one of which, just stopped with a flower, appeared to have been used by the good lady that very morning; most likely in order to keep up her spirits during the melancholy ceremony she was about to attend.

'So,' said I to myself, 'the Prophet is not much heeded in this house. I shall know another time how to appreciate a sanctified and mortified look. Our doctor, who calls himself a stanch Mussulman, I see makes up for his large potations of cold water and sherbet abroad, by his good stock of wine at home.'

By the time I had satisfied my curiosity here, and had inspected the other rooms, which belonged to the servants, Zeenab had prepared our breakfast, which she placed before us in the khanum's room. We sat down next to each other, and reposed upon the very cushion of which I have just given the description. Nothing could be more delicious than the meal which she had pre-

pared: there was a dish of rice, white as snow, and near it a plate of roast meat, cut into small bits, wrapped up in a large flap of bread; then a beautiful Ispahan melon, in long slices; some pears and apricots; an omelette warmed from a preceding meal; cheese, onions, and leeks; a basin of sour curds, and two different sorts of sherbet: added to this, we had some delicious sweetmeats, and a basin full of new honey.

'How, in the name of your mother,' exclaimed I, as I pulled up my whiskers, and surveyed the good things before me, 'how have you managed to collect all this so soon? This is a breakfast fit for the Shah.'

'Oh, as to that,' she replied, 'do not trouble yourself, but fall to. My mistress ordered her breakfast to be prepared overnight, but on second thoughts this morning she determined to make her meal at the house of the deceased, and has left me, as you see, but little to do. Come, let us eat and be merry.'

Accordingly, we did honour to the break-

fast, and left but little for those who might come after us. After we had washed our hands, we placed the wine before us, and having each broken the commandment by taking a cup, we congratulated ourselves upon being two of the happiest of human beings.

Such was my delight, that taking up the guitar which was near me, and putting aside all apprehension for the present, and all care for the future, I tuned it to my voice, and sang the following ode of Hafiz, which I had learnt in my youth, when I used to charm my hearers in the bath.

What bliss is like to whisp'ring love,
Or dalliance in the bowers of spring?
Why then delay my bliss t' improve?
Haste, haste, my love, the goblet bring.

Each hour that joy and mirth bestow
Call it treasure, count it gain;
Fool is the man who seeks to know
His pleasure will it end in pain!

The links which our existence bind
Hang not by one weak thread alone;
Of man's distress why tease the mind?
Sufficient 'tis—we know our own.

The double charms of love and wine
Alike from one sweet source arise:
Are we to blame, shall we repine,
When unconstrain'd the passions rise?

If, innocent in heart and mind,
I sin unconscious of offence,
What use, O casuist, shall I find
In absolution's recompense?

Hermits the flowing spring approve;
Poets the sparkling bowl enjoy:
And, till he's judged by powers above,
Hafiz will drink, and sing, and toy.

Zeenab was quite in ecstasy: she had never heard any thing so delightful in her life, and forgetting that both of us were but wretched individuals,—she a slave, I the most destitute of beings,—we did and felt as if all that surrounded us was our own, and that the wine and our love would last for ever.

Having sang several more songs, and emptied several cups of wine, I found that my poetry was exhausted as well as our bottle.

It was still quite early, and we had much time before us. ‘Zeenab,’ said I, ‘you have long promised to tell me the history of your life, and now is a good opportunity; we are not likely to be interrupted for a long while, and, as our meetings at night are very uncertain, an hour cannot be better filled up than by the recital of your adventures.’ She assented to my proposal with much good-humour, and began as follows.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The history of Zeenab, the Cûrdish slave.

'I AM the daughter of a chief, well known in the Cûrdistan by the name of Okous Aga. Who my mother was I do not precisely know. I have heard that I am the produce of one of the secret meetings at Kerrund*; but as such mysterious doings are hushed up among the Cûrds, I have never dared to question any body concern-

* This no doubt relates to certain mysterious and obscene customs, which are said to be practised among the Yezeedeis, at the village of Kerrund, in the Cûrdistan, and peculiar to the tribe of *Núsiri*, commonly called *Chiragh Kûsh*, or lamp extinguishers. Antiquarians pretend in them to trace a resemblance to the abominable worship of Venus, as practised by the Babylonians, and recorded in Herodotus, Book I. cxcix. sec.

ing them, and cannot, therefore, ascertain whether the reports about my birth be true or not. It is very certain that I never looked up to any one as my mother; but was brought up at hazard among our women, and that my earliest friend was a foal, that lived as an inmate with us. It was born in the very tent which my father's wives occupied; and its dam, of the purest Arabian blood, was treated more like one of the family than a quadruped: in fact, it received much more attention than any of the wives; it enjoyed the warmest place in the tent, was beautifully clothed, and in all our journeys was the first object of our cares. When the mare died, an universal lamentation ensued throughout the encampment. The foal lived to be my father's war-horse, and is to this day the pride of the Cûrdistan. But would to Heaven that we had felt less affection for these animals! then I might still have been a free woman; for, in truth, the many vicissitudes which we have undergone originated in the pos-

session of a mare, of which you shall hear more hereafter.

'You must know, that although the Cûrds do not allow that they are subject to any power, yet our ancestors (and so did my father to a certain time) grazed their flocks and pitched their tents in that part of the Cûrdistan mountains belonging to Turkey, which are situated in the government of the Pasha of Bagdad. Whenever that chief had any war on his hands, he frequently called upon our tribes to afford him supplies of horsemen, who being celebrated throughout Asia, were always foremost in the battle. My father, from his strength, his courage, and his horsemanship, was a great favourite with the Pasha, and in high request on such occasions. He was a majestic figure on horseback; and when his countenance was shaded by the back part of his cap thrown over his brow, his look inspired terror. He had killed several men, and was consequently honoured with the distinction of bearing a tuft of hair

on his spear. But it was when clad in armour that he was most to be admired. I shall never forget the grandeur of his appearance, when, with his horse curvetting under him, I saw him in the midst of a thousand cavaliers, all dressed in shining cuirasses, peacock's feathers streaming from their helmets, and their spears glittering in the sun, preparing themselves to join the Pasha. From the result of this expedition we date part of our misfortunes. The Wahabi had advanced into the territory of Bagdad, and even threatened that city, when the Pasha thought it high time to call the Cûrds to his assistance. He took the field with a considerable number of troops, and immediately marched against the enemy. In a night attack, my father happened to fall in with and slay the son of the Arab Sheikh himself, who commanded the Wahabi; and, having despoiled him of his arms, he led away with him the mare which his antagonist had mounted. He too well knew the value of such a prize not immedi-

ately to take the utmost care of it; and, in order to keep his good fortune from the knowledge of the Turkish chieftain, who would do every thing in his power to get it from him, he sent the beast to his encampment, with orders that it should be carefully concealed, and lodged in the tent which his harem occupied. His precautions were useless, because the feat which he had performed, and the circumstances attending it, were soon known to every one; but as the Pasha had a great esteem for him, and there being no reason to suppose that the mare was more than an ordinary one, he made no inquiries about her. However, not very long after the war had ceased, the Wahabi having been driven back into the desert, and the Cûrds having retired to their mountains, we were surprised one morning by a visit from one of the Pasha's chief officers, viz. the *Mirakhor*, or master of the horse, who came escorted by a handsome train of ten men, well mounted and armed. Every body was immediately on the alert to do

them honour. Their horses were taken to the nearest pasture, and picketed with plenty of grass before them: the horsemen were led into the men's tent with much ceremony, where they were treated with coffee and pipes; and a large caldron of rice was set on the fire to make a *pilau*. Two lambs were immediately killed, and cooked into a savoury dish by the women, who also baked piles of bread on the occasion. In short, we did all in our power to put into practice those obligations of hospitality which are binding upon the wandering tribes.

'As soon as my father was apprized of the approach of his visitors, even when they were first espied at a distance, it immediately occurred to him what might be their object, and he ordered his eldest son to mount the mare without a moment's delay, to take her into a neighbouring dell until he should hear further from him. Our tents were pitched in a line, on the brink of a mountain torrent; and it was therefore easy to steal away unperceived in the

deep bed through which it flowed; and the high mountains in our neighbourhood, with the intricacies of which we were well acquainted, afforded good shelter to us in cases of disturbance.

'I recollect the whole circumstance just as if it were yesterday; for we women could peep into the place where the men were assembled, and our curiosity led us to listen to what they said. The Mirakhor and two other Turks were seated; the others stood at the entrance of the tent, resting on their arms. My father placed himself at some distance, on the carpet, with his hands before him, and his feet tucked under him, looking very humble, but at the same time casting his eyes very sharply around him.

"'You are welcome, and you have brought happiness with you,' exclaimed my father.

"'Happily met,' answered the Mirakhor; it is long since we have seen each other;' and when they had repeated these and

similar sorts of compliments over and over again, they relapsed into silence; their pipes, which they smoked until the place was darkened with the fume, holding them in lieu of conversation.

'‘Our master, the Pasha,’ said the Mirakhor, ‘sends you health and peace; he loves you, and says that you are one of his best and oldest friends. *Mashallah!* praise be to God! You are a good man; all Cûrds are good; their friends are our friends, and their enemies our enemies.’

'An old Turk, who was standing, the foremost of the attendants, applauded this speech by a sort of low growl; and then my father, shrugging up his shoulders, and pressing his hands on his knees, answered: ‘I am the Pasha's slave; I am your slave; you do me much honour. *Il hem dillah*, thanks to Heaven, we eat our bread in peace under the Pasha's shade, and put our caps on one side without fear. God give him plenty.’

'After a short pause; ‘The business of

our coming, Okous Aga,' said the Mirakhor, 'is this:—The Wahabi (curses be on their beards!) have sent a deputation to our chief, requiring from him the mare upon which the son of their Sheikh was mounted at the time that he was killed. Although they say that his blood is on our heads, and that nothing but the Pasha's life, or that of his son, can ever redeem it; yet that subject they will for the present waive, in order to regain possession of her. They say, she has the most perfect pedigree of any in Arabia; that from generation to generation her descent is to be traced to the mare which the Prophet rode on his flight from Medina; and, in order to regain her, they offer to throw money on the board until the Pasha shall say stop. Now all the world knows that you are the brave he, who overcame and slew the Sheikh's son, and that yours is the spoil of the mare. My master, after consulting with the nobles and the chief men of Bagdad, has determined to take the offer of the Wahabi into con-

sideration; and since it is become a business of government, has sent me to request you to deliver her up into my hands.—This is my errand, and I have said it.'

"'*Wallah! billah!* By the Pasha's salt which I have eat, by your soul, by the mother who bore you, by the stars and the heavens, I swear that all the Wahabi say is false. Where is the mare they pretend to have lost, and where the miserable jade that fell to my lot? I got a mare, 'tis true, but so lean, so wretched, that I sold her to an Arab the day after the battle. You may have the bridle and saddle, if you please; but as for the beast, I have her not.'

"'*Allah, Allah!*' exclaimed the Mirakhor, 'this is a business of much consequence. Okous Aga, you are an upright man, and so am I. Do not laugh at our beards, and send us away without caps on our heads. If we do not bring back the mare, our faces will be black to all eternity, and the doors of friendship between you and the Pasha

will be shut. By my soul, tell me; where is the beast?'

"'Friend,' answered my father, 'what shall I say? what can I do? The mare is not here—the Wahabi are liars—and I speak the truth.' Then with a softened tone, he approached the Mirakhor, and spoke to him for a long time in a whisper, with much animation and apparent persuasion; for, at the end of their conversation, they appeared to be well agreed.

'The Mirakhor then said aloud: 'Well, if such is the case, and the beast is not in your possession, *Allah kerim*, God is merciful, and there is no combating against fate. We must return to Bagdad.'

'My father then rose from his seat, and came into the women's tent, leaving his guests to smoke their pipes and drink coffee, preparatory to the meal which was making ready for them. He ordered his wife, who was the depository of his money, to bring him a bag of gold, that was care-

fully wrapped in many a piece of old cloth, and deposited in a trunk, which, with his rich horse furniture, the parade pack-saddle, and other things of value, were placed in a corner of the tent. He took out twenty *Bajoglis* (ducats), which he tied into the corner of a handkerchief, and thrust them into his bosom; and then giving his orders that the victuals should forthwith be served up, he returned to his guests. Little was said until the hour of eating came, and the few words that were uttered turned on horses, dogs, and arms. The Mirakhor drew from his girdle a long pistol, mounted in silver, which was shown around to all the company as a real English pistol. Another man exhibited his scimitar, which was assured to be a black *Khorassani* blade of the first water; and my father produced a long straight sword, sharp on both edges, which he had taken from the son of the Arab Sheikh whom he had slain.

'The dinner being ready, the round leathern cloth was placed before the Mi-

rakhor, upon which many flaps of bread, just baked, were thrown, and water was handed about for washing the right hand. A mess of *chorba*, or soup, was served up in a large wooden dish, and placed in the centre of the cloth. My father then said aloud, '*Bismillah*,' in the name of God; and all the party, consisting of the Mirakhor, his ten followers, my father, and three of his attendants, settling themselves round the dish, with their right shoulders advanced forwards, partook of the soup with wooden spoons. A lamb roasted whole succeeded the mess, which was pulled to pieces in a short time, each man getting as large a portion of it for himself as he could. The feast was closed by an immense dish of rice, which was dived into by the hands and fingers of all present. As fast as they were satisfied, each man got up and washed, saying, *Shukur Allah*, thanks to God; and *Allah bereket versin*, may God restore you plenty. The remains were then rolled up in the leathern cloth, and taken outside

the tents, where my father's shepherds soon made an end of them.

'The Mirakhor being anxious to sleep at a village in the plain, expressed a wish to depart, and his suite went to prepare their horses, leaving him and my father in the tent. I, who had narrowly watched the whole of the proceedings, was determined to see what should take place between them, and lent an ear to what they said.

'My father said, 'Indeed ten ducats is all I can give—we are poor—where shall I find more?' To which the Mirakhor replied, 'It is impossible: you know perfectly what will happen if I do not receive double that sum: the Pasha, when he finds that we have not brought the mare, will order me back again to seize you, and will take possession of all your property. I am indeed ordered to do that now, in case you refuse his request, but shall not touch you, if you come to my terms, which are twenty gold pieces. So, my friend, decide.' Upon which, my father took the handkerchief from his bosom, and

taking out the money from it, counted twenty ducats into the Mirakhor's hand, who, when satisfied that they were all good, untied the white muslin that was wound round his turban, and placing them in the folds of it, twisted it round his head again. 'Now,' said he to my father, 'we have eat salt together; we are friends; and should the Pasha attempt any thing, I will interfere. But you must send him a present, or otherwise it will be impossible to prevent him from molesting you.'

"'*Bashem ustun*, upon my head be it!' answered my father. 'I possess a famous greyhound, celebrated throughout the whole of the Cûrdistan, which can seize an antelope at full speed; a creature the like of which the Shah of Persia's father never even saw in a dream. Will that do?'

"'Perfectly well for one thing; but that is not enough. Consider of what consequence it is that my master should be pleased with you.'

"'I tell you what,' said he: 'a thought

has struck me; I have a daughter, more beautiful than the moon, round, large hipped, and greatly inclined to corpulency. You must say to him, that although the Yezeedies are infidels in his eyes, and as the dust under his feet, yet still he may perhaps be anxious to possess a beauty, which even the houris of Mahomed's Paradise would be jealous of, and I am ready to send her to him.'

'The Mirakhor clapped his hands in ecstasy, and said, '*Aferin! Aferin!* well said! this is excellent! I will make the offer, and no doubt he will accept it; and thus you will have a powerful friend in his harem, who will get you out of this scrape, and protect you for the future.' Upon this they seemed agreed. I, who it appears was to be the victim, left my watching-place to ruminate upon what was likely to be my future destiny. At first I was inclined to weep, and to lament over my fate; but after a little consideration, I exclaimed, 'O my soul! am I to be a Pasha's lady?

am I to wear fine clothes? am I to be borne in a litter? Oh! the delight of a litter will be too great! How all the girls of the mountains will envy me!'

'After some time had elapsed, looking from the tents into the open country, I saw the Mirakhor and his party, who had not failed to take the greyhound with him, duly dressed out in its gayest trappings, making their way along the side of the chain of hills which bordered our camp. I then heard my father expressing his thankfulness and gratitude for having so well got rid of such unwelcome visitors.

'As soon as they were fairly out of sight, he despatched one of his shepherd's boys to his son in the mountains, ordering him to bring back the mare; and when the animal was safely lodged in the women's tent, he called together the elders of his tribe, consisting of his own and his wives' relations, who were encamped in our vicinity. He explained to them the situation in which he was placed; showing that his and their de-

struction was inevitable should they continue any longer in the territory of the Pasha, who would not fail to seize this opportunity of levying fines and exactions, and reducing them to want and beggary. They were assembled in the men's tent, to the number of ten persons; the place of honour, the corner, being given to my father's uncle, the elder of the tribe, an old man, whose beard, as white as snow, descended to his girdle.

"'You know,' said my father, 'that we are Yezeedies; and you also know the hatred which all Mussulmans bear to us: the Pasha has hitherto pretended friendship to me individually, because I have fought his battles, because I am a lion in the fight, and drink the blood of his enemies; but his love of money is so great that nothing can satisfy it; and rather than lose this opportunity, he would see me, my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather, and all my race grilling in eternal fires. We are too few to resist him, although, by that great

Power whom we all worship, if we had not wives and children to protect, I, with a spear in my hand, my sword by my side, and mounted on my mare,—I would not fear to encounter the whole host of his dastardly ragamuffins, and I should like to see the *cherkaji** that would face me. I propose, therefore, that, without a moment's delay, we abandon the Turkish territory, and migrate into Persia, where we shall not fail to meet with welcome and protection.'

"'Okous Aga,' said his uncle to him, whilst every one seemed to listen with great respect to what he would say, 'Okous Aga, you are my brother's son; you are my child; you are the head of our tribe, and our best support and protection. If I were to advise you to give up the mare to the Pasha, you would think me unworthy of

* The *cherkajis* (literally *wheelers about*), in oriental armies are skirmishers, who are thrown out from the main body to engage in the fight, and are generally esteemed the most expert horsemen and the best soldiers.

being a Cûrd and a Yezeedi; and even were he now to get possession of her, we should not be spared; for such is the experience I have of Turkish governors, that when once they have a pretext in hand for oppression, they never fail to make use of it. Therefore, I am of your opinion,—we cannot remain here. Old as I am, and accustomed as I have been from my earliest infancy to graze our flocks and herds upon these mountains,—to see the sun rise over yonder hill and set in that distant plain,—much as I love these spots upon which our ancestors have been bred and born; yet it shall not be said that I have been the cause of the ruin of our tribe. I am, therefore, for immediate departure: delay now would be dangerous. In two more days we shall be visited by the Pasha's troops, who will take from us hostages, and then here shall we be fixed, and here will ruin overwhelm us. Let us go, my children; God is great and merciful. The time may come when you will be restored to your ancient seats,

and when you may again range from your summer pastures to your winter quarters, and from your winter quarters to your pastures, without fear and apprehension.'

'When he had done speaking, an old shepherd, who had great experience in all that related to the seasons, and considerable knowledge of the country between our mountains and those of Persia, spoke as follows:—'If we go, we must go immediately, for a day's delay might stop us. The snows on the mountains are already beginning to melt, and the torrents will be so swoln in another week, that we shall not be able to get the sheep across them. Besides, it is now about three weeks to the day when the sun enters the sign of the Ram, at which time our ewes will, *inshallah*, please God, bring forth in plenty; and they ought to have performed their journey and be at rest long before that time. We ought to settle beforehand in what tract of country we shall fix ourselves, because the Persian wandering tribes are very tenacious

of their rights of pasturage; and should we trespass upon them, without proper authority from the government, our shepherds and theirs would not fail to come to blows, and God only knows the consequences.'

"'He speaks true,' exclaimed my father: then turning to the shepherd, he exclaimed, 'Well said, Karabeg; well done! you are a good servant, and you have given good advice. Before we think of establishing ourselves in Persia, one of us must go to Kermanshah, and ask leave of the Prince to appoint us to a good country; and when once we have got out of the Pasha's reach, I will perform that service, and return to you in time to prevent strife with the other wandering tribes.'

'The assembly being unanimous for immediate departure, my father gave his orders, that the cattle should be called in, the tents broken up, and the oxen in readiness to receive their loads; that the camels should have their pack-saddles put upon them, and that every thing should be in readiness to depart by midnight, in order

that we might reach our first stage about an hour after sunrise. His mare, which was now become an object of the first consequence, was to be mounted by my father, in person, whilst his chief wife, with her children, were to travel in the *cajaveh* or panniers; the camel which was to carry them being ornamented with trappings inlaid with beads, set off by red cloth trimmings, and a thick profusion of tassels.

'As soon as this was known by the women, they set up shouts of wailing and lamentation. The evil appeared to them greater than it really was; for they expected nothing less than the immediate approach of the Pasha's troops to seize upon the tribe, and carry them all into slavery.

'As for me,' said Zeenab, 'my misery arose from another cause; for ever since I had overheard the conversation between my father and the Mirakhor, I could think of nothing else than of the charms of being a Pasha's lady. My dream was now over, and instead of the rich dresses, the sump-

tuous palaces, the gilded litters, and the luxury of state, which I had flattered myself was to be my future lot, I had now nothing before me but my old drudgeries, —the loading of beasts, the packing up of baggage, the churning of milk, and the making of butter.

'Our whole camp was now in motion: and, as far as the eye could reach, the mountains were swarming with the flocks and herds of our tribe, which were driven by the shepherds towards their different encampments. The tents were taken to pieces, and prepared for loading. The women, who took the greatest share in the labour of departure, were seen every where actively bestirring themselves to pack up the furniture and utensils. The carpets were rolled up; the camel-trunks filled; all the materials for making butter collected; and the pack-saddles of the mules, oxen, and camels, laid out for immediate use. The cattle being arrived, the camels were made to kneel down in a ring, and

were covered with their pack-saddles; the oxen had their pads put upon them; and the mules were tied into strings of five or seven each, and ornamented with their bells and thick felt coverings. The sheep and goats, in the mean while, at the close of day, had already began their march, guarded by their watch-dogs, and accompanied by their shepherds, one of whom walked in front, whilst the whole train followed.

'At midnight the whole camp had cleared the ground; and, as the day dawned, our line of march was to be seen to a great distance, winding along the mountains. We kept a track little followed, in order not to meet any one, who might give information of our movements to the Pasha; and, after several days' march, we reached the frontier of Persia, with much fewer accidents, and much less difficulties, than might have been expected. During the journey, my father, in conjunction with the principal men of his tribe, kept a constant look out in the rear, determined, should any of the Pasha's

people approach us with an intention of impeding our progress, they would, without hesitation, make every resistance in their power. But fortune favoured us, and we saw none but shepherds, belonging to Cûrdish tribes, who occupied part of the country that we travelled over.

'When we had reached a place of safety, my father rode forwards to Kermanshah, the seat of government of a powerful Prince, one of the king of Persia's sons, in order to claim his protection, and to receive his permission to occupy one of the pasturages situated within the Persian territory. We waited for his return with great anxiety, for in the mean while we were liable to an attack from both Turks and Persians; but as it is the policy of both countries to entice the wandering tribes into their territory, we met with no molestation from the chief of the Persian town which happened to be the nearest to us.

'At length my father returned, and with him an officer belonging to the prince, who

assigned us a tract of country, about ten parasangs within the Persian frontier. Our winter residence was situated in a sheltered nook of the mountains, not far from a copious spring of water; and our summer quarters, about three days' journey off, were described as situated in the coolest spot of the adjacent mountains, abounding in grass and water, and distant from any chance of molestation from the Turks.

My father was well known at Kermanshah, and when his arrival and the object of his mission were known, the Prince expressed great pleasure, treated him with much consideration, and dismissed him invested with a dress of honour. No stipulations were made as to the terms upon which he was to be received, and unlimited promises of protection were held out to him. 'If the Pasha,' said the Prince, 'claims you and your tribe, as the property of his government, and sends me a request that I should not admit you into mine, I will burn his father, and laugh at his beard. The

face of God's world is open to every one, and if man is ill-treated in one spot, he will take himself where better treatment is to be found.' In short, we settled, and returned to our former habits and occupations.

'As the Prince had expected, so it happened. A very short time after our arrival an officer from the Pacha appeared at Kermanshah, bearing a letter, making a formal demand, that my father, with the whole of his tribe, should be sent back to his territory; and stating all the circumstances relative to our flight. My father was called a thief, and accused of having stolen a mare of immense value, which was described as the Pasha's property. The animal was demanded to be instantly restored; and in case it were not, threats were made that immediate reprisals on Persian property should ensue. The whole of these circumstances were made known to my father, and he was summoned forthwith to appear before the Prince.

'Consternation seized us as soon as this

intelligence was known amongst us. It was evident that the Pasha was determined to leave nothing undone to regain possession of the mare, and to ruin my father; nor could it be supposed that a weak and poor tribe like ours was likely to withstand the intrigues, bribes, and machinations of so powerful a chief: besides, the possession of such a treasure would of itself be a crime in the eyes of the Persians, and they would certainly endeavour to get her from us, if not now, yet at some more favourable opportunity. It would soon be known that many of us were Yezeedies, a circumstance of itself sufficient to excite the hatred and execration of every good sectary of Ali; and every probability existed, even supposing the mare to be out of the question, that we should be a prey to every sort of persecution as soon as time enough should have passed over our heads for intrigue to have worked its effects.

'Before my father left us to attend the Prince's summons, he had given secret orders that the mare should be put into

some place of safety, in case he should be obliged to deny that he possessed her; but on his return we found that such a precaution was unnecessary. He had been kindly received by the Prince, who had assured him that he was resolved not to accede to the Pasha's demands in any one case; that my father might enjoy the possession of his mare, and depend upon protection and security as long as he remained in his territory. His words were something to this purpose: 'Set your mind at ease, Okous Aga. As long as you remain under our shade you may lay your head on your pillow in full security. What does the Pasha mean by claiming you and your tribe as the subjects of his government? The gates of the palace of my father, the Centre of the Universe and King of Kings, are open to every one, and as soon as the stranger has touched the skirt of his robe he is safe. You have sought our protection, and we should not be Mussulmans if we

refused it. Go, return to your tents, be happy, and leave the Pasha to us.'

'This produced great rejoicings amongst us; and my father, to celebrate his success, gave a feast to the chiefs and elders of the tribe, where our present situation was fully discussed, and our plans for the future taken into consideration. Every one present was elated with the success that had attended our flight excepting one, and that was the old man, my father's uncle. He had seen much of the Persians, having served under Nadir Shah when a youth, and nothing could induce him to put any faith in the promises and fair words of the Prince. 'You do not know the Persians,' said he, addressing himself to the assembly. 'You have never had any dealings with them, and therefore you permit yourselves to be lulled into security by their flattering expressions and their winning and amiable manners. But I have lived long with them, and have learned the value of what they say. Their

weapons are not such as you have been accustomed to meet in the bold encounter, and the open attack: instead of the sword and spear, theirs are treachery, deceit, falsehood; and when you are the least prepared, you find yourselves caught as in a net; ruin and desolation surround when you think that you are seated on a bed of roses. Lying is their great, their national vice. Do not you remark that they confirm every word by an oath? What is the use of oaths to men who speak the truth? One man swears by your soul, and by his own head, by your child, by the Prophet, by his relations and ancestors; another swears by the *Kebleh**, by the king, and by his beard; a third by your death, by the salt he eats, by the death of Imâm Hosein. Do they care for any one of these things? No, they feel all the time that they lie, and then out comes the oath. Now in our case, is it to be supposed that we shall be left unmolested, in the quiet pos-

* The point towards which the Mohamedans turn in prayer.

session of this mare, which has brought so much misfortune already on our heads? The Persians are more wild, if possible, on the subject of horses than the Turks, and an Arabian mare in their sight is of greater value than diamonds and rubies. Should the Shah hear of the one we possess, he will instantly send for it, and what are we to do then? Shall we continue in arms against all the world? No, my friends. You may think what you please; but, for my part, I look upon your situation as precarious, and advise you, as a general rule, not to put your trust in Persians, be they who or what they may.'

'The event proved to be precisely what the old man had predicted, and was the cause of placing me where you now see me.

'One morning, about an hour before the dawn of day, we heard an unusual stir among the dogs of the camp; they did not cease to bark and make a most furious noise. As we were accustomed to the attacks of wolves, who were kept at bay by our dogs,

we did not at first pay attention to the disturbance; but at length my father and his sons arose, and, taking their guns with them, went to see what could have happened. They had not proceeded twenty steps before they saw a horseman, and then a second, and shortly after several more; in short, they discovered that their tents were surrounded. My father immediately gave the alarm, and instantly all the camp was in motion. The horsemen rushed on my father, and attempted to seize him; but he shot the first dead at his feet, and with his sword wounded the second. The report of the gun, and the noise of the fray, was a signal to the invaders for a general attack, and in a short time our camp was entered at every corner. Their principal object was evidently the mare; for the women's tent was attacked first, and there they instantly seized the object of their search.

'As the day dawned, we observed that our invaders were Persians, and we also soon discovered that they were acting from

authority. My father had unluckily killed their chief, and that was a sufficient reason for our being made prisoners. Conceive our situation: it was a scene of misery that I shall never forget. My father was treated with every indignity before our eyes; our property was pillaged, and—'

Zeenab was proceeding to relate to me how she became the property of Mirza Ahmak, when a loud knocking at the gate of the house was heard. We both got up in great alarm. My fair one entreated me to take my departure by the terrace, while she went to see who it might be. By the voice, that was ordering the door to be opened, she recognized the doctor himself, and trusting to her own ingenuity for giving good reasons for the appearance of breakfast and good cheer, which he would perceive, she forthwith unbarred the gate and admitted him.

From the terrace I could watch all that was going on. The doctor appeared quite delighted to find Zeenab alone, and made

her some speeches so full of tenderness, that there was no mistaking how his affections were placed. Looking into the window of his wife's apartment, he perceived the remains of the breakfast, and every appearance of the room having been occupied. He was asking some questions concerning what he saw, when in came the khanum herself, followed by her women. She entered the house so unexpectedly, that she appeared before them ere they could separate. I shall never forget her look and attitude at this sight.

'*Selam aleikum!* peace be unto ye!' said she, with mock respect, 'I am your very humble servant. I hope that the health of both your excellencies is good, and that you have passed your time agreeably. I have arrived too soon, I fear.' Then the blood creeping into her face, she very soon relinquished her raillery, and fell tooth and nail upon the unhappy culprits.

'And breakfast too—and in my room. *Mashallah! Mashallah!* It is understood,

then, that I am become less than a dog; now that in my own house, on my own carpet, on my very pillow, my slaves give up their hearts to joy. *La Allah il Allah!* There is but one God! I am all astonishment! I am fallen from the heavens to the ground!'

Then addressing herself to her husband, she said, 'As for you, Mirza Ahmak, look at me, and tell me, by my soul, are you to be counted a man amongst men? A doctor too, the Locman of his day, a sage, with that monkey's face, with that goat's beard, with that humped back, to be playing the lover, the swain! Curses attend such a beard!' then putting up her five fingers to his face, she said, '*Poof!* I spit on such a face. Who am I, then, that you prefer an unclean slave to me? What have I done, that you should treat me with such indignity? When you had nothing but your prescriptions and your medicines in the world, I came, and made a man of you. You are become something, thanks to me!

You now stand before a king:—men bow the head to you. You wear a Cashmerian shawl:—you are become a person of substance. Say, then, oh, you less than man! what is the meaning of all this?'

The doctor, during this attack upon him, was swearing abundance of oaths, and making ten thousands of exclamations, in proof of his innocence. Nothing, however, could stop the volubility of his wife, or calm her rage. By this time she had worked her passion up to such a pitch, that oath succeeded oath; and blasphemy blasphemy, in one raging, unceasing torrent. From her husband she fell on Zeenab, and from Zeenab she returned again to her husband, until she foamed at the mouth. She was not satisfied with words alone, but seizing the wretched girl by one of the long tresses which hung down her back, she pulled it till she roared with pain; then, with the assistance of the other slaves, she was thrown into the reservoir, where

they beat and soused her until both parties were nearly exhausted. Oh, how I burned to fly to her rescue! My body was become like glowing fire. I could have drunk the blood of the unfeeling wretches. But what could I do? Had I rushed into the harem, death would have been my lot; for most probably they would have impaled me on the spot; and what good would that have done to Zeenab? She would have been even more cruelly treated than before, and the doctor's wife would not have been the less jealous. So when the storm had subsided, I quietly stept down from my hiding-place on the terrace, and walked into the open country without the town, to consider upon the course which I ought to pursue. To remain with the doctor was out of the question; and to expect to enjoy Zeenab's company again was folly. My heart bled, when I reflected what might be the fate of that poor girl; for I had heard horrid stories of the iniqui-

ties performed in harems, and there was no length to which such a demon as the khanum might not go, with one so entirely in her power.

END OF VOL. I.